

Things as they are; or, Notes of a traveller through some of the middle and northern states.

The new Tomb Mount Vernon—See p.13.

Notch of the White hills, from the north—See p. 158

THINGS AS THEY ARE: OR, NOTES OF A TRAVELLER THROUGH SOME OF THE MIDDLE AND NORTHERN STATES.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CITY OF WASHINGTON

NEW-YORK: HARPER & BROTHERS—82 CLIFF-STREET

1834.

E165 D98

[Entered according to the Act of Congress, in the year 1834, by Harper & Brothers, in the Clerk's Office of the Southern District of New-York.]

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

Washington—Mount Vernon 9

CHAPTER II.

Washington—Advantages of Small Capitals—Salutary Hints to Ambition—Foreigner disappointed—More Reflections—Vines—Railroad 17

Library of Congress

CHAPTER III.

Baltimore—Route to Philadelphia—Railroads 23

CHAPTER IV.

Philadelphia 28

CHAPTER V.

New-York—Activity of Citizens—Merchants—Societies—Steamboats 31

CHAPTER VI.

The Sea-shore—Long Branch—Bathing—Scenery—Shipwrecks—Forms of Danger and Modes of Escape 37

CHAPTER VII.

New-York—Books—The Apparatus of Literature—Conversations with Booksellers on Public Taste, &c.—A Friend returned from a Tour to Europe—Foreign Feelings and Ignorance respecting America—Varying Aspects of the Streets of the Metropolis—Impressions from observing them 46

CHAPTER VIII.

New-York continued—Foreign Residents and Visitors—Foreign Books 55

vi

CHAPTER IX.

Library of Congress

Fashions and old Fashions in Travelling—New-York Harbour—Retreat of Washington's Army from Long Island—The East River—Low State of Agriculture caused by our defective Education—Hell Gate—Long Island Sound 62

CHAPTER X.

New-Haven—Literary Aspect—Refined Society—Taste in Architecture—Burying-ground—Franklin Institute—Paintings of Trumbull—American Taste—Learning 73

CHAPTER XI.

A Connecticut Clergyman's Family—Wood-hauling—Middletown 88

CHAPTER XII.

Hartford—Charter Hill, the Seat of the Willis Family—Public Institutions—Society—Antiquities 97

CHAPTER XIII.

Narrative of a Visit to the Springs in the last Century—Newspapers 104

CHAPTER XIV.

Music—New-England Villages contrasted with Italy on this subject—A Traveller in search of Health—Burying-grounds—Rural Celebration of Independence at Northampton—Amherst—Academies of Massachusetts—Exhibition 113

CHAPTER XV.

Female Character—A Connecticut School—Scenery on Connecticut River—Deerfield—Turner's Falls—Early State of the Country 122

Library of Congress

CHAPTER XVI.

Copies of ancient Letters, illustrating something of the State of Things in this Part of the Country early in the last Century 129

CHAPTER XVII.

Erroneous Opinions of Foreigners of our Society—A great political Character—Sabbath-school 135

vii

CHAPTER XVIII.

Approach to the White Hills—Bath—Reflections on Society—The Wild Ammonoosuc—Breton Woods—Crawford's—Scenery 143

CHAPTER XIX.

Excursion to Mount Washington—Walk through the Forest—The Camp—Ascent of the Mountain—View from the Summit—The Notch—Old Crawford's—Bartlet 151

CHAPTER XX.

Boston—Environs—Literary Institutions—Mount Auburn—Remarks on our Intellectual Machinery 160

CHAPTER XXI.

Nahant—Plymouth—Principles of the Pilgrims—Their Institutions—Excuse for not knowing more—Lyceums 165

CHAPTER XXII.

Library of Congress

New-York—Hotels—Sculpture—South America—Dr. Sweet—Foreign Inventions 175

CHAPTER XXIII.

A new Corner of the World—Recollections of the Cholera 185

CHAPTER XXIV.

Fashionable Education—Hudson River—The Power of Fancy—Catskill Mountains—
Thunder-storms—Rainbows—Morning Scene 192

CHAPTER XXV.

Method and Effects of Labour-saving in teaching Latin—A Frontiers-man—Early History—
Conversations on Health and Dress 199

CHAPTER XXVI.

The Privileges of American Citizens in Trial by Jury—Battleground of Saratoga—Former
State of Ballston Springs—Leisure Time—The Beauties of the German Language—A
Foreign Spirit in America—Value of our own Tongue 207

viii

CHAPTER XXVII.

Thoughts on Foreign Travel—Dr. Sweet, the natural Bonesetter—Retiring Travellers 218

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Evil Effects of Pagan Education in a Christian Land—Improvements in Temperance—
Sources of intemperate Habits in our Country—Proper Estimation of Foreign Travel—Our

Library of Congress

own Moral and Physical Resources—Negligence of good Men in making Travels at home Pleasing and Useful—A Card-party in a Steamboat 227

CHAPTER XXIX.

Whitehall—Story of Sergeant Tom, a Creature of the Revolution—Lake George—Charming Scenery and Interesting Historical Associations—Ticonderoga—A Revolutionary Tradition—An Oracle of Philology—Crown Point 236

CHAPTER XXX.

Feelings on entering Canada—State of Society—Emigrants—Scenery, &c. on the St. Lawrence—Architecture—Wilful Errors on Education in Convents 243

CHAPTER XXXI.

Different Travellers have different Eyes—The Polish Exiles—Regrets on the Necessity of closing—“Tom Slowstarter's” Farewell 248

NOTES OF A TRAVELLER.

9

CHAPTER I.

Washington—Mount Vernon.

Whoever visits Washington for the first time during the session of Congress has much to observe. It is his own fault if he does not find some one who will give him information, or help him to amusement among the variety of objects and characters around him. There are always idlers hanging on some petition, who have news to tell. The representatives and senators from his state will be glad to see him as their countryman, and feel an obligation to render him some of those attentions which he might expect from the consul

Library of Congress

of his nation in a foreign port. Let him be careful, however, not to look for more than is reasonable, for business is very pressing upon a large part of the members, and calls of this kind are frequent. Members have their trials like other men; and if they grow inattentive, or even show a disposition to get rid of you, forgive them. Many a speech is made in the House and Senate to thin, restless, coughing, and whispering audiences; and talents which have transported their possessor five hundred or a thousand miles to a seat in the government, now, by a strange reaction, will sometimes send fifty or a hundred people out of the House. Events multiply daily in a country like this; and time goes on in spite of every thing, though it please only a very small minority at best; and although commonly nobody can be found who is satisfied in every thing. In the main, the members are about as civil to persons ² ¹⁰ indifferent to them, as other people are whose interest it is on the whole rather to please than to displease; and will meet you in the rotunda of the capitol by appointment; introduce you into the library of Congress; tell what senator is looking out of the middle window, or what distinguished representative is turning over Audubon's Ornithology; point to the President's house, the departments, the patent-office, and the top of the dome, as objects worthy of a visit; and then entering their chamber, introduce you to a few loungers near their own seats, yawning at the thoughts of another stupid day, or nervous and feverish with anxiety about the country or themselves. If it be gloomy weather, late in the session, you feel as if you were in a prison, for the people seem as dissatisfied as convicts. One is lost in thought about something invisible, another blushes over some newspaper which has attacked him, a third hurries to hear whether you have brought any news, and all are either hoping or despairing about soon obtaining their release.

The broad staircase on the east side of the capitol, by which you wearily mount from the level of the yard to the floor of the houses, the rotunda, &c., is a deformity, interfering exceedingly with the architectural beauty of the front. It is unprecedented in Europe, so far as I have seen, unless the capitol of Rome should be claimed as an example, which

Library of Congress

cannot with propriety be done. The “stairs which lead to the capitol” of that metropolis are made merely to mount the hill, and do not cover a large part of the edifice.

I was much pleased with the morning scene from the terrace, and still more with that from the top of the capitol. The view would be splendid indeed if the city were of the size originally expected, or even if the surrounding country were well cultivated. I could not, however, spend much time in the city, without first visiting Mount Vernon. The very name of that place had long been dear to me. The sound always seemed sweet and solemn to my ears. I have had a peculiar feeling for it ever since the day when my father came home with a badge of mourning upon his arm, and said, with a tear in his eye, that General Washington was dead. In the sadness of our house that day I participated as a child, with but few ideas beyond these, that a man, loved and venerated by my father above all others, had left the world, and that such excellence as I could never hope to see was gone for ever. And where did he die? At Mount Vernon. So sweet a name, associated with such feelings in the mind of a stripling, I had always heard with emotion; and it was with a degree of solemnity that it occurred to me at Washington, that I was now in the vicinity of the place.

Not falling in company with any persons of congenial feelings who wished to visit the spot, I determined to proceed thither alone; and mounting a horse, set off one fine morning on that most interesting pilgrimage. A great part of the low level land which extends south from Capitol Hill to Greenleaf's Point, where the East Branch joins the Potomac, is entirely unenclosed and uncultivated, with the exception of a field here and there. I passed a spot, however, which makes the strongest contrast with the general waste appearance of this extensive tract, and indeed with most of the soil in the vicinity of Washington. There four acres have been enclosed, manured, and cultivated with care; and now supply the market of the metropolis with a large share of its vegetables, yielding to the proprietor a valuable income. What a lamentable picture is presented by a country like this, worn out by exhausting crops, and abandoned years ago to sterility and solitude! The road to Baltimore lies through a similar region; and my whole ride to Mount Vernon offered only

Library of Congress

the sad variety of a few plantations, where the same debilitating process appeared to have been not quite completed. The few crops I saw seemed to say that they were destined to be the last on those extensive fields; and the scattered habitations of planters and slaves looked as if ready to be deserted, and soon to resemble the ruins seen on former sites, long since abandoned. The people are the first I ever saw who have not energy enough to pull down their old houses.

Shrub oaks and other stunted trees have sprung up on the deserted fields, and show how slow is nature to recover the springs of vegetable life when they have once been cut off. Among these I often paused to contemplate the grand aspect of the capitol from a distance, which is visible from a thousand points around. The enormous tolls paid on the road to Alexandria show the inconveniences arising to travellers out of a thin population. Roads and bridges are erected at greater expense, and contributions for their support are divided among a few instead of multitudes. The reconstruction of the long bridge over the Potomac, as I ought to have mentioned, has been undertaken: but it seems to me a discouraging task, especially since the steamboats carry so large a part of the travellers on the route to Alexandria.

Alexandria is a large town, with spacious stores near the water, and in the upper part several streets of handsome and even elegant houses. The view of the city and its environs, from an eminence beyond it, was such as to show its extent and principal edifices, yet not to exhibit any thing of its harbour or the general plan of the streets. After this I had nothing like an extensive or a pleasing view during the rest of my ride, as the season was not far enough advanced to give the woods all their beauty, the late rains had rendered the road very wet, and the habitations of men were few and poor.

At length I entered the Mount Vernon estate; and there was some feeling excited by the thought of the cavalcades and personages that had passed through the same gate. I was also reminded of visits I had made to Roman villas, and the deserted avenues to ancient cities; and my impressions were in some respects similar, though in others very different

Library of Congress

from any thing I had ever experienced before. The solitude was as profound as that of any deserted region of Italy; the habitations of men, at many parts of the road, seemed as distant; and nature appeared almost as much left to herself. But who can describe the difference between the character of Washington and that of the ancient warriors, whose memory we associate with the scenes they visited? Though our education teaches us far too much to admire them, plain sense as well as Christianity leads us to despise their motives and to condemn their actions. When will our children be trained up to a clear conception and a just estimate of the character of Washington, in whose heart alone was more real greatness than in all heathen antiquity? His principles and conduct, enforced by the injunctions of the Scriptures, what influence might they not exert upon the minds and hearts of American youth!

The rear of the family-mansion appears two or three times through openings in the foliage, before the visiter reaches it; and although it is venerable, it shows, on a nearer approach, evident marks of decay. I passed the dwellings of the negroes, where an old family servant offered his services as guide; and dismounting, hastened on to get rid of the groups which assembled around me. Two ranges of out-buildings, now partly disused, run back from the ends of the mansion and form a court,—in which what messengers have heretofore reined up, what guests have alighted! The plain piazza in front, with the fine sloping and partly shaded lawn, descending to the brow of the precipice over the Potomac, the clumps of old trees, the broad and winding river below, all appear much as they have been represented for half a century on so many sorts of landscape furniture with which we have been familiar.

The remains of the father of his country have been removed within a few months from the old family-vault, on the brow of the precipice, to a spot near the corner of the vineyard enclosure, where the river is concealed from view, but which was selected by him during life. A hasty sketch may give better ideas of its appearance than any description. I dismissed my guide, that I might indulge alone in the feelings which had been rising in my heart as I approached the spot I had so long regarded with reverence; and however

Library of Congress

difficult it might be to trace their source or to define their nature, I am sure that I have spent but few half-hours in my life in meditations more sweet and yet more bitter. They need not be detailed. Whoever loves virtue and his country, and has done any thing less than his duty, or whoever feels like a son of Washington, however humble he may be, and apprehends how much reason there is to 2* 14 mourn over the loss of his spirit and his principles, may well conceive them if he will imagine himself placed alone in a solitary spot near the ashes of the dead. At the same time, to a man of an opposite character any description would of course be lost. I regretted here the want of some truly appropriate national music, when I found myself breathing a very soft and plaintive Scotch lament. Of all the poetry I have seen written on Mount Vernon, none strikes my ear with so much simplicity and sweetness, mingled with so much elevation, as the lines of Brainerd.

There is something much more congenial to my mind in the simple and indeed humble depository of the ashes of Washington than in the most splendid monuments of Italy or even of Egypt. Where there is no attempt made to captivate the eye, the mind is left at perfect freedom to form her own conceptions; and it is no disrespect to the greatest artist to say, that a refined and virtuous fancy may transcend in its conceptions the work of any human hands. I have no objection to the erection of monuments to Washington; nay, I hope the day may come when every city, town, and village in the Union may possess one of some sort, constructed in the purest taste: but I feel that any fabric of art in this place would be only an impediment to the mind, which, if left to itself, will create the noblest conceptions out of nothing.

Surely enough is not made of the memory of Washington in our country, when we reflect what has been and now is the influence of his name in the world. His great example of disinterestedness has done more for the human race than we can possibly ascertain; and is likely to produce still greater effects. His birthday should be observed by our children as a day of becoming joy; and our schools should pour out their young inhabitants to hear his virtues recounted and to sing songs in his praise.

Library of Congress

I returned from Alexandria to Washington in the steamboat. There were several Virginians on board, of different classes and characters, who engaged in conversation on slavery. This subject, which was long regarded as a prohibited one, and by general consent excluded from conversation in all societies, has become the most general topic throughout the state, as is well known, since the legislature have taken it up as a serious business of deliberation. Virginia has long suffered under this incubus; and from a mere love of that inaction which its oppressive weight has produced, has allowed it, like a vampire, to overshadow her eyes, and to suck her blood. Nothing but a severe shock can ever effectually arouse men from such a lethargy. "A little more sleep, a little more slumber," is a tune marked "*Dacapo ad libitum*," and is generally sung over and over for life. Nothing can interrupt it but a louder note on some different key. The cracking of the foundation of one's house, however a rattling among the clapboards and shingles, and an insuppressible scream of hunger from within, are serious sounds; and it is no wonder that men begin to look about and talk when things get to such a pass. The further they examine, the more they perceive that time and the elements are poor masons, carpenters, and providers; and that Hercules never works for a man who keeps his hands in his pockets.

My Virginia fellow-passengers seemed to me, like boys about to sign their indentures to a new trade, or seamen inspecting a ship which they are invited to man for a long voyage. They had many objections to make against the plan, principles, and arrangements proposed, but the reasons of their reluctance all seemed to be comprehended in one word,—it looked too much like hard work. Things were in a strange state in Virginia two years ago, when nobody felt able to speak of the most obvious facts, though they were the causes of general suffering and of private discontent. Now they have got upon the opposite extreme, and there is danger only of talking too much. They have as yet no distinct, feasible plan proposed; and the question appears to turn on a general hinge: a change or no change? A change they wish; but then, the first thought is, who shall do the work? The apprehension of being obliged to labour seemed to keep my fellow-passengers at arm's length from the point. It drove them back to the *statu quo*, but as this affords no

Library of Congress

resting-place, they came jumping back again, as on a recoiling spring, to the necessity of a change.

My friends, the hardship of work is not so great as you suppose. Give up this notion; it has almost ruined you, and will ruin you totally if you hug it a little longer. How do we do at the North? How do they do at the West? The spade and plough are not instruments of torture: their rough handles have the same drug secreted in them which was concealed in the racket of the Persian physician, and which with exercise exhaled its essence and restored the health of the monarch. Its influence also extends to the intellectual and moral man. Suppose you had made an experiment in one of your spacious and fertile counties thirty years ago, led your sons to the field, and trained them to the labours which consolidate and invigorate the frame. These labours, at the same time, foster a taste for harmless, cheap, and natural enjoyments. How would your fields have looked? What would have been their products under such improved systems as you and your sons might have introduced? I fancy I see the little neighbourhoods which would have been formed, many a field now waste smiling with verdure, books and schools multiplied, manufactories built on the streams, good roads stretching hither and thither, happiness secured by intelligence, virtue, and prosperity. Your eyes are restless, your brows are clouded. There is nothing more likely to remove such symptoms than the sight of our land well tilled by our own hands, the sounds of peace and joy in our habitations; and what idle man ever knew them?

It has been bitterly complained of in Virginia that useful labour is despised; and no doubt the statesmen who would gain true honour should take Cincinnatus for their model. A most intelligent and independent step has been taken by one of the literary institutions of the state, the results of which must be useful. Manual labour has been connected with study at Hampden Sidney College; and although the opposition to it was at first very general and powerful, a remarkable change in the opinion of the wise and good has already commenced; and no one who looks at the state of things can doubt that this is one of

Library of Congress

the most wise and promising steps which could have been taken to repair the wastes of generations, and to remould the habits and condition of the people.

CHAPTER II.

Washington—Advantages of Small Capitals—Salutary Hints to Ambition—Foreigner disappointed—More Reflections—Vines—Railroad.

I never visit Washington without being reminded of the miscalculations which were made by some of our wisest men, in relation to the growth of the city in population and importance. The magnificence of the plan is evident to every eye, and so is the total want of power to complete it. Broad avenues, named after the states, stretch indeed from the centre towards various points; but some of them are impassable, and others lead to nothing worth seeing. Unlike the great roads which met in the Roman forum in the days of Roman greatness, they are more like some of them at the present day, which conduct only to a deserted and steril region in the vicinity. Still there is one gratification to be derived from the public disappointment in relation to the growth of the federal city: the intrigues of a court are more exposed to view than they could be in a large metropolis; and the shades of a great population are not extended over them for their concealment. In European capitals, public men are much less exposed to public scrutiny; and great facilities are enjoyed for all sorts of intrigues. Besides, every thing connected with the grandeur and brilliancy of power loses much of its importance in Washington, because so much of the interior of things is exposed to view. In this city visitors and inhabitants are alike impressed with what they see. Every year presents many new faces in the Houses of Congress, where new interests are maintained with the same ardour as before. When you call on a friend, you are perhaps introduced into the same chamber you were in the last winter, with the same two beds in the corners, the same display of giltedged 18 paper, and sealing-wax upon the table, and the same symptoms around you of public business and partisan-spirit, while you reflect that the former occupant of the room and of one of the

Library of Congress

beds, restored again to private life, is five hundred or a thousand miles off, divested of his feathers, and a fortunate man if not the worse for his campaign at the seat of government.

In the streets of Washington no warning seems omitted from which a spectator might learn patriotism, and a statesman honesty. The stage-horses wheel as gracefully to receive the unsuccessful applicant for office as to bring the court-favourite to his lodgings; and the minister's furniture shines as bright at the auctioneer's door on the day of his taking leave as it did on the evening of his first drawing-room. Oh the silent lessons I have read at the auctioneer's on ambition and her reward, the boasted purity of a popular government, the value and splendour of real virtue, and the contemptible character of her counterfeits! Indeed, so severe are some of the sarcasms thus practically presented, that I was once ready to exclaim against the punishment inflicted on a late favourite of fortune, then newly sunk in disgrace, as greater than he could bear.

The carpets on which his flatterers had stood, with smiles and compliments for him, were now cheapened on account of the dust of courtiers' feet, and the peculiar obsequiousness with which the surface had been scraped at audiences and levees. But, ah! the bowls and dishes, the cups and glasses out of which so many simpering mouths had been so lately fed, and now scarcely dry from the unavailing banquets: what emblems were they of the hollowness and brittleness of the station they had recently embellished! The minion had before possessed my secret contempt and abhorrence; but I could now have saved him the pangs of such a show. And yet such things are salutary. If they are able to affect others as they affected me, a walk through Pennsylvania Avenue might cure the most ambitious and corrupt of statesmen and courtiers.

Some of the inhabitants of Washington have had intelligence and observation enough to afford much interesting information in relation to public men and national affairs. What we receive through the newspapers, or other channels little more correct, passes under their own eyes. And indeed, perhaps, no part of the country is left so much alone to form unbiassed opinions. While speeches are made in Congress, written out, amended, and

Library of Congress

published by thousands to influence some county, state, or number of states, nobody tries to discolour things to the Washingtonians, knowing that it would be in vain. Every thing is therefore left to be seen by them without disguise; and the consequence is, they often form correct opinions, and speak with becoming frankness. It is gratifying also to reflect, that local interests and influences are not likely to engross and control the attention of the government in so great a degree as they have often done in large cities; and there is no mob to overawe or even to threaten their freedom.

To an American who has seen any of the capitals of Europe, the absence of military display is one of the most agreeable features in view, wherever he turns. There is not a soldier to guard gates or doors in Washington, with the single exception of those at the navy-yard, a mile or more from the capitol. The total want of every sign of military preparation is also very accordant with one's feelings. After the last war with England, a felon imprisoned for some crime confessed, as I recollect, that during his career of iniquity he had entered into a conspiracy to seize President Madison, and deliver him to the British ships then lying in the Potomac, while he was a sentinel to guard the President's house. As there was not even a wall of sufficient height to prevent an approach to the doors, and no other obstacle, such a plan might have been easily accomplished, I suppose, under favourable circumstances, by mere surprise. Though danger was thus in one instance incurred by the neglect to take military precautions, how much better it is than to have the display of paid soldiers at every turn, and to become familiar with the music and the weapons of death! From some acquaintance with the feelings and habits of foreigners, I can say with great confidence, that probably a large proportion of the intelligent men of Europe would learn with surprise that there is not a soldier on guard in the capital of the United States, even during the sessions of Congress, although the familiar fact excites not a thought in our minds.

I have heard a good deal said about schools of eloquence, the rhetorical talents of certain portions of the country, and native genius; but I found true in Washington what I believed in the French Chambers and the British Houses of Lords and Commons: that

Library of Congress

many men who suppose themselves great orators are deficient in some or all of the indispensable qualifications; and that not a few real orators are unsuspecting of their talents, or unconscious of what they consist in. With our early training at school and college, we are very apt to suppose that fine language must approach the Latin standard, either in words or arrangement; and after we have lived long enough to correct this mistake, we are some time in settling the great fact, that eloquence can never consist in useless words. Yet nothing is more true: and although we often find high encomiums passed by the newspapers on particular speeches, could we have witnessed their delivery, we should generally have found them falling blunt and dead upon the closed ears of a thin and sleepy audience.

With abundant materials for thought, I took my seat in a stage-coach for Baltimore, and revived many a recollection of strolls through European palaces and prisons, and events in the history of courts. Washington, thought I, is a metropolis of nuisances, a capital of intrigues, and ever must be. But yet how different it is, in some respects, from the seat of an European court! The profession of a courtier requires a long apprenticeship, which it is almost impossible to obtain in this country, among the frequent changes to which our system subjects us. Though the growth of bad men may be rapid, their career must generally be short. But what results might not be produced, if such characters as may be conceived, were allowed to prosecute their operations for ten, twenty, or thirty years, without fear of interruption, and under the shelter of an unchanging dynasty? 21 Who would ever think of studying diplomacy in the United States, as it is regularly studied in some European countries? So preposterous a thing would be undertaken only by a madman. On the other side of the Atlantic, a man well trained in the forms of international business may expect to be gratified with the substantial rewards awaiting its performance: but here, selections of ministers, secretaries, &c. may be made next year on grounds which cannot now be even conjectured: and as for five or ten years hence, no one pretends to foresee who may be in a foreign embassy, or why. The only offices in Washington which can be looked on as permanent, are a few clerkships in the

Library of Congress

departments, and the keepers of certain hotels; the very stage-horses must stare at the new faces they annually behold among the legislators, and wonder why there are so frequent changes in that *line*.

Benefit may be derived by some men from spending a winter or two at Washington.—They extend their acquaintance with men and things, return with new impressions concerning distant states, more enlarged views of national interests and principles, and attachments contracted with estimable friends from different districts. When questions arise which awaken a spirit of division among representatives from different parts of the Union, they see whence those feelings arise, observe their tendency, reflect on the danger, and devise measures for their prevention or removal. At the same time they raise in the opinion of others an estimation of the states which they worthily represent, and excite in their minds such reflections and feelings as they themselves experience. If they have any intercourse with men of a less sincere or of a really vicious character, their admiration of patriotism and virtue is increased; and if they converse with intelligent foreigners, they learn how highly our country is regarded in Europe by one class, and how it is disliked by others.

There was an elegant young Frenchman in the stage-coach, who had arrived in Washington only the day before, but had become so much ennuyé, as he declared, at the sight of the city, that he had hurried away from it, intending never to return. Now, why was he disappointed? Washington certainly must be a very different city from what he had expected to find it. The seat of government, as such alone it appears, had not attracted him; for Congress, the Supreme Court, the President, and all the machinery and accompaniments of it were there to be seen, but these he had not visited. He had missed the crowds and frivolities of Paris,—I will not say the vices; and see how much we gain in having our capital in so great a degree as it is, divested of these. In Europe, courts corrupt capitals, and capitals courts and kingdoms.

Mr. Adlum has his vineyard near Baltimore, where he has had great success in raising grapes, and even in making wine. How unaccountable it seems, that with all the sagacity

Library of Congress

of our countrymen, the abundance of indigenous vines, and the ease with which they, as well as some foreign species may be cultivated, this branch of culture should have been so little attended to. The fruit is highly esteemed by us, vast quantities of wine are imported, and abundance of miserable and pernicious drinks is used by persons who might be more cheaply or healthfully furnished with wholesome weak wine, were the proper course pursued to make it. The vine is probably more generally found in our different states, and more indifferent to the varieties of soil, than any other plant we have. The treatment and culture of it are also remarkably cheap. A vineyard of twenty acres may be tended by two men employed only a part of the year; and the value of the harvest will be great after the second year. At the same time, the soil best adapted to the vine is sandy and pebbly, such as is to a great extent now lying waste in the United States, as of little or no value.

Many vines are seen in different parts of the country, chiefly trained for ornament and shade, but how few persons there are who attend to the pruning or clipping of them at the proper season: operations which are indispensable to the production of a good crop, and the neglect of which, for a single season in Europe, would cause an immense loss.

23

There are several fine sights presented on that part of the Baltimore and Ohio railroad which lies along the Washington road for three or four miles before we reach the former city. In one place it passes a broad and deep valley on the top of a great embankment, while a stream and a country-road cross its route through arched openings far beneath. It is travelled to the "Point of Rocks," on the Potomac. The scenery to Fredericktown, 60 miles, is constantly varying, and often wild and romantic. Ellicott's Mills may be compared with Little Falls on the Erie Canal

CHAPTER III.

Baltimore—Route to Philadelphia—Railroads.

Library of Congress

Baltimore has as much the appearance of prosperity and enterprise, in proportion to its size, as perhaps any city in America. The broad and straight streets are lined with large stores and dwellings, some of which rival in taste the best in the country, and are thronged with well-dressed and busy people. The monuments, rising high in the air from open squares, give an imposing effect; while the shipping in the river and harbour, and the noble railroads extending towards Susquehanna and the Ohio, with which it is designed to open a direct communication, indicate that the inhabitants have the intelligence and the ability to accomplish great things, to promote that commerce which is the main-spring of the city. The number of stage-coaches which arrive and depart is truly astonishing. Scarcely a quarter of an hour passed, when I was so situated at the Indian Queen as to observe the street, without the alighting of travellers or the strapping on of more baggage; and frequently several stage-coaches stood at once before the door. The travelling by steamboats and railroads is also very great; so that when navigation is open and Congress 24 is in session, the place is one of our greatest thoroughfares. The multitudes coming from the West impress one with the rapid increase of population in those flourishing regions.

Baltimore has few monuments to public intelligence worthy of the name. There are few objects which I have seen, that convey the idea, so gratifying to a stranger and so honourable to the citizens, that in this place knowledge is duly appreciated, and useful learning is shared by all classes. I speak of monuments as the Europeans use the word: that is, as public edifices.

The University can scarcely be said to exist in any branch but the medical department, which has above one hundred students. The Athenæum has 42,000 volumes in its library. Public education is improving rapidly. Four fine schoolhouses have been recently erected. No. 4, in Hanover-street, is a beautiful specimen of architecture, being constructed of whitish granite, with a tasteful façade. These buildings are much more ornamental than the

Library of Congress

public schools of New-York. May the interior prove but as useful, and Baltimore will have abundant reason to value her new acquisitions.

There are persons in every considerable community among us, whose real pecuniary interest would be consulted by the cultivation of knowledge; and from these some exertions might be expected, at least, on the ground of sound mercantile speculation. Although I would wish to see loftier motives than this brought into operation on such a subject, my chief desire is that the important benefits may be at any rate enjoyed. Teachers and booksellers are directly interested in the case; and one would suppose that men of real literary or scientific attainments would wish to have their merits judged of by an enlightened public, or seek to cultivate knowledge among those around them, that they might enjoy the pleasure of participating. One would think, too, that as public peace and private security can be enjoyed only amid good order, intelligence, and morality, every individual would feel the elevation of public intelligence to be a matter of personal interest, and lend his voice and countenance, if not his purse, to its aid. And as our females are generally more dependant than men upon the state of society ²⁵ around them, and not less capable of appreciating the value of intellectual refinement, they should be ready on every occasion to throw their powerful influence into the scale in its favour. Strange it is, that amid a population of such extent, with so much prosperity and wealth, with such noble works for internal communication as are in progress, in possession of every facility, and so near the capital of the country, there should be any delay to adopt measures to render this city as much distinguished for intelligence as for commercial enterprise. One half the ingenuity and money bestowed upon a single structure, might lay the foundation of a far more necessary monument than that commemorating a battle.

There is but little to interest the traveller in the steamboat from Baltimore to Frenchtown. The soil on both sides is poor, and large tracts have been impoverished by exhausting crops in years past, and consequently neglected and almost deserted. Not a building, or a wall, or scarcely a tree shows signs of even local or individual prosperity; and there is nothing which approaches nearer to what may be called scenery, than rough banks and

Library of Congress

some bare hills of moderate size. In some places, at a distance in the interior, is excellent land; but all we see hereabouts justifies the remonstrances made in the legislature of Maryland against the continuance of the present state of things with regard to slavery, on account of its ruinous influence on agriculture. How desirable it is that the necessary energy should be displayed on such a waste territory, and that it should be recovered to fertility and usefulness.

One of those scenes I once witnessed here, to which we are more exposed, in steamboats than we are generally aware. An insane man, who was a passenger, rose in the dead of night, and waked us from sleep in the darkness, with some of the most shocking screams I ever heard. Some half dozen men were roused at the same time with blows which he gave them at a venture; and to judge from such information as was to be obtained, an angry scuffle ensued between them, each erroneously supposing his neighbours the aggressors. A light brought about such an explanation as caused a cessation of hostilities; but it was long before the cause of the confusion was discovered, and still longer before the wily maniac was confined and silenced. We are always exposed to a panic whenever the cabin is left at night without a light; and why serious accidents do not often occur, I cannot tell.

One of the happiest effects of travelling on railroads is the freedom it gives you from the impertinence and impositions of porters, cartmen, *et omne id genus*, who infest common steamboat landings. A long and solitary row of carriages was standing on the shore awaiting our arrival; not a shout was heard, scarcely any thing was seen to move except the locomotive, and the arms of the man who caught the rope thrown from our boat. The passengers were filed off along a planked walk to the carriages through one gangway, while their luggage, which had already been stowed safely away, was rolled on shore by another, in two light wagons; and almost without speaking a word, the seats were occupied, the wagons attached behind, the half-locomotive began to snort, and the whole retinue was on the way with as little ado and as little loss of time as I have been guilty of in telling the story. The men and boys who should, or rather would have been on the spot, hallooing and bawling, but for the railroad, it is to be hoped were somewhere in better

Library of Congress

business. I wish them nothing worse, while I wish travellers nothing better than to be thus rid of them—whenever they can as well do without them.

I had one very pleasant reflection to make upon the route of this railroad, viz., that it had not injured a single valuable farm, or crossed a spot of good soil.

What is to come on the back of railroads I do not know, or how long it will be before they are to be in their turn superseded by some more economical or rapid expedient, as they have superseded canals. When the great canal was cut across this very cape a few years since, competition was as little apprehended, even in the transportation of passengers, as it is now on this road. And in a country where we are as ready to act on a new suggestion, and to push a new experiment to the utmost, as we are to embrace a new opinion, who can tell what new plans, what new enterprises are before us?

Steamboats, canals, and railroads, in their different spheres, have done so much to promote brotherly love among our countrymen, and promise so much more, that I look upon them with a kind of affectionate gratitude. We formerly thought that the vast extent of our territory would preclude that intimate intercourse between distant parts which is necessary to unity of feeling; and that the want of a sense of mutual dependance would foster mutual estrangement: but these improvements have eaten up miles and degrees of space, levelled mountains, contracted plains, dried up rivers, and drank up half the water on our coasts. They have, as it were, made a present of a good pair of seven-league boots to every son and daughter of the United States. And what gadding on a large scale is now performed! What long jumps do we annually make from home to our neighbours of Maine, Michigan, Kentucky and Louisiana! It has been said of some of our countrymen that they have no home: but it might be more truly said of them all, that they have half a dozen; the stage-coach, the canal-boat, the steamboat, the packet-ship, the inn, and now the railroad car. The vehicles for travelling thus furnish us with a practical refutation of all the prognostics that have been proclaimed of evil to our country, from want of intercourse

Library of Congress

between its different parts, founded on the experience of other nations; for they have made us to differ from them in this most essential particular.

On reaching Newcastle, the cars stop near the steamboat, the passengers alight upon a wooden stage, and are soon safely embarked, while their luggage is dexterously rolled in upon the forward deck. Cars laden with merchandise may be driven into a large storehouse, to be protected in stormy weather or at night, and fifty of them may be housed as comfortably and with as little ceremony as an old milch cow in a farmer's barn.

Many pleasant little spots of cultivated land are seen along the Delaware, chiefly on the Pennsylvania side; and on either hand are numerous patches rescued from the river 28 by stone walls and banks of earth, which exclude the water when it rises, and preserve the crops from overflow. Few travellers know the pleasant scenes which are found a little in the interior, as no great route passes through them; and many of the inhabitants, being almost cut off from intercourse with the world, are little affected by the exciting influences of the day, so irresistible to those who are exposed to them. This is particularly true of a portion of New-Jersey, not far remote. What a bitter enemy to human improvement is a pine barren! It is the best emblem we can show of a real European *legitimate*. It keeps the people on the borders of starvation, so that let the thirst of the mind for knowledge be never so great, it is always exceeded by the famine of the stomach. It separates men as far asunder as possible, and thus the fire of knowledge, like scattered brands, can never kindle into a blaze. How these obstacles are to be overcome, by what means we can hope to triumph over poverty and distance in intellectual, as we can in physical respects, is yet to be determined. Certain it is that this is a question of great importance; and the success we have had in improvements of less consequence should stimulate our exertions in this.

CHAPTER IV.

Philadelphia.

Library of Congress

Philadelphia has beauties and excellences of its own. None of our other cities has so fine a kitchen-garden as Southwark, or displays so much of the beauty of utility and, uniformity in its streets. In justice, however, I must allow that no suburbs can be more forbidding, and no introduction to a large town less promising, than the access by some of the great routes. I hope the boasted literary character of the citizens is not more apparent than real. Whether it be 29 so or not, I sincerely wish them ten-fold of this commendable quality, which they value enough at least to claim the credit of it. We need not wish to institute exact comparisons between the intellectual merits of any of our cities, lest the aggregate should reflect upon the country. It were much better to labour zealously by combined exertions to increase the whole stock.

Why Philadelphia should not be the Athens of America, I am sure I cannot tell, nor what should prevent Baltimore, Boston, or New-York. The people have all the means within their reach. We are in the habit of attributing considerable literary honour to some of the cities of Europe, the inhabitants of which are bound on every hand by restrictions which greatly impede them; while we, insensible of our advantages, so superior in many respects, indolently sigh for the time when learning will take up its abode among us. It probably is in the power of individuals of intelligence, virtue, and influence, now living, by only coming out as the decided champions of knowledge, to effect a speedy and total change of things in the United States. But timidity on one side, old habits on another, and business all around, hem in and shoot down all the hopes we entertain of any of our citizens here and elsewhere. Punning is the perversion of the use of words; and the Philadelphians are notorious punsters. Some of them will manufacture more puns in a half hour than you may hear elsewhere in a twelvemonth. They have some fine institutions which promote solid learning among different classes, such as the Athenæum, Franklin Library, and sundry societies which provide lectures, books, &c. In medical institutions they are of course first. The general aspect of the city certainly must invite the mind to study and reflection, one would think, more than that of most other towns in the Union. How anybody can pursue

Library of Congress

a straight train of thought while threading the crooked lanes and alleys of New-York and Boston, especially with the din of the former in his ears, it is difficult to tell.

There is one reason why I prefer Philadelphia; I feel the persuasion always upon me that every thing is clean. 30 The breadth and uniformity, of the streets favour cleanliness, and a great deal of washing and scrubbing is visible; for whatever house you enter, you see hydrants, and tubs, and baths, and rills of living water, and have the satisfaction of reflecting that hogsheads and rivers of it are daily used to good purpose.

The elevated banks of the Schuylkill are ornamented with several fine public institutions, among which the Marine Hospital is conspicuous. The marble quarries, a short distance up that stream, afford most valuable facilities for the erection of edifices of a beautiful material. A tour of visitation to the Water Works, Penitentiary, House of Refuge, &c., out of the city, and the various public buildings, exhibitions, &c. within, will afford any traveller much interest, and he will see and hear things important to be known, too numerous to write or to read. Though the state is sadly deficient in public schools, there are some good ones; and the infant schools of this city have been celebrated. The American. Sunday School Union has its centre here; and, the publishing apparatus is very extensive. They have for several years issued about a million of little volumes annually, and have taken great pains to improve the character of works for the intellectual, moral, and religious instruction of the young.

But one who is bound on a long journey must not allow himself to be too long detained by the agreeable objects of this orderly and well-arranged city.

CHAPTER V.

New-York—Activity of Citizens—Merchants—Societies—Steamboats.

Whoever visits New-York feels as he does in a watch-maker's shop; everybody goes there for the true time, and feels on leaving it as if he had been wound up or regulated a new

Library of Congress

and better than he could have done it himself. He hears a clicking, as it were, on all sides of him, and finds every thing he looks at in movement, and not a nook or corner but what is brim-full of business. Apparently there is no inactivity; that is, no person is quiescent both in body and mind at once. The reason of this is, that the lazy are excited by the perpetual motion of the busy, or at least compelled to bestir themselves to avoid being run over. If a man has any sympathetic excitability, he will inevitably step quicker in Broadway than in an ox-path in the country; and if he have none, a regard for his flesh and bones will make him keep pace with the crowd with which he moves, avoid collision with that which he meets, and hurry over the cross-walks to escape the carts and omnibuses.

Another great reason why there is so much excitement about New-York is, that the principal vehicles for travelling are seen by so large a portion of the population. Little impression was produced on the public in former days, when the stage-coaches took off most of the travellers by night or at irregular hours: but what can be more animating than to witness the departure or arrival of the steamboats? At six and seven in the morning boats start for all quarters of the compass, like so many carrier-pigeons, released from one point to take the courses they choose. When the hour arrives, the hissing and roaring of the steam-pipe suddenly ceases, the departing travellers spring on board, their remaining 32 friends fly for the shore, the wheels move as if by instinct, and boats tear friend from friend. No row-boat is left behind, as formerly, to accommodate those who lag behind: the day of toleration for the lazy has passed; and all the comfort they receive, when they beg a moment's delay, is an assurance that they will be "in time for the next boat." But in spite of all such warnings, we find the ancient race of the Loiterers not quite extinct. They are found at every steamboat-landing in the country punctually at their time; that is, half a minute at least too late: and if the moment for starting should be delayed until to-morrow or next week, they still would so contrive it as to keep up their consistency. This spirit of delay once detained one of my travelling companions a little too long, and separated us for a part of the route, on the enjoyment of which we had indulged anticipations, loading one of us with a double portion of luggage, and at the same time depriving the other of a change

Library of Congress

of raiment. I once saw an orange-seller hurry on shore at the signal for starting, without waiting to give change to a customer, whose money he held under pretence that he had no time; and in another instance a man, who meditated a similar trick on his porter, was pulled back by him for pay, and detained on shore, while his spouse was taken to another city without him.

One would think, from the activity of the New-York merchant, that he must be wholly absorbed in the pursuit of wealth: but on becoming acquainted with the facts, you often find that he only redoubles his activity in business hours to gain time for some other employment which he prefers. Not a small proportion of the whole number are connected with some society for the promotion of the good of their fellow-citizens as fellow-men, in morals, intelligence, religion, or some other important interests. This is by no means true of all, nor of so many as would be desirable, as is proved by the fact, that numbers are members of two, three, and sometimes more associations. They take their intelligence and activity with them wherever they go; and therefore in their society or committee-rooms, with the aid of their commercial punctuality, clear-sightedness, and 33 promptitude, generally act with judgment, good effect, and a saving of time, which could not be expected from men of different habits. The amount of business performed by the active merchants of this city in benevolent societies would astonish any one, if it were possible to present a clear estimate of it. And on the other hand, an account of the money annually contributed by them for the promotion of similar objects would form an amount probably greater than might be easily believed. In all this the purest motives have a large share of influence. It is only necessary to know individuals personally to perceive that many are actuated not merely by generosity, but by Christian principle; and the prospects of good to the city, the country, and the world, from the extension of the spirit of benevolence among the influential men of this city, are very encouraging. Examples of the kind encourage imitation, while they reward those who furnish them; and every year sees one individual and another embarking in the delightful career of disinterested beneficence, and new

Library of Congress

exertions made by those who have become more interested or encouraged by what they have already effected.

It is highly gratifying also to perceive that the education and employments of multitudes of the young, who are to occupy important stations in society hereafter, are preparing them for more general and extensive labours for the same great objects. The present societies, created and directed by the fathers, have afforded their sons, among other advantages, that most important one of useful and improving employment for their leisure. In multitudes of instances they have led to the formation of characters amiable for their philanthropy, valuable for their intelligence and purity, and promising by their practical knowledge, and the excellent influence they already exercise in their youthful sphere. Thousands of them are at this moment active and responsible members of societies, whose express objects are the good of others: and while it is a most agreeable sight to witness their labours in literary associations, Sabbath-schools, Bible, Tract, and Temperance societies, it is no less gratifying to trace out the influence which systematic 4 34 beneficence produces upon their habits, minds, and affections, and diffuses among their family and social circles. And how important are these influences in a population of nearly 250,000! But a view of what has been done, and what is doing in this great city by the good and the intelligent, leads the mind to consider what ought to be or may yet be effected.

And surely, with all the advantages offered by New-York for the procuring and the diffusion of knowledge, more should be undertaken for the benefit of public intelligence. This city should be the centre of learning for the Union. No other place in the country can possibly enjoy the advantages she has to become such; yet some of our cities and villages have turned to so much better account what means they have possessed, that they have become literary in a tenfold greater proportion. The public schools are the best large ones in the country, excepting those of Boston; and in some departments are far superior to them. Some of the private schools are good: but the vast majority, particularly of the fashionable ones, are miserably defective. Columbia College and the University are very respectable institutions for the higher branches of learning, while the Mercantile Library

Library of Congress

Association, the Apprentices' Library, the City Library, the Athenæum, &c., afford valuable means of self-instruction to their various classes of readers. Unfortunately, the talents of the learned are kept too much out of sight, and are of course too much underrated by the public, who scarcely know that they exist. Attempts have been made, from time to time, to establish monthly magazines of different descriptions, but they have never flourished well; for writers of acknowledged talent cannot be procured without a reasonable reward, and the publishers are not often disposed to hazard a large sum on an uncertainty. If such men, however, were employed in writing for publication, how much better it would be for the country than to leave them in the retirement of their families or of their professions.

There is, therefore, yet much to be done by the inhabitants of New-York for the promotion of knowledge; and to the 35 rising generation, I think, we may safely look for it, as well as for the execution of still more extensive projects of benevolence. And on this hope we may rely without the charge of being visionary in any degree; for the means are daily increasing, and the hands are multiplying and strengthening by which it is to be accomplished.

But I have been wandering from my subject, and can seek an excuse for indulging in such elevating topics only in the ennobling view presented by the Bay of New-York, to the traveller who crosses it in one of the great steamboats which daily skim over its surface. Were the shores but of an elevation corresponding with the other features of the scene, there would be nothing to regret by the friend of the picturesque. Staten Island approaches nearer than any other part of the surrounding land to what we might wish to see on every side, and presents a pleasing swell, with a variety of lines and hues in its enclosures and crops, the village, and the spacious Quarantine edifices. There are some pretty spots, with pleasant shades, enjoying a view of a water scene, animated by the frequent passage of the finest steamboats.

These vessels have now become improved and refined, apparently almost to the grade of rational beings. They seem to a passenger on board half conscious of the promises

Library of Congress

held out by the newspapers of their speed and punctuality, of the hour when their arrival may be expected, and the anxiety of those who await them; and quite familiar with the shoals and landing-places. You feel their emotions, at least their straining and labour under your feet. When you observe their movements from a distance, they appear still more as if endued with life and thought. A boat, with a beautiful model and elegant proportions, comes flying over the water almost without disturbing it, rounds a point, and directs her rapid course towards a landing-place. You see that her speed is known, and that her punctuality has been established by long and regular practice: for the persons who have come from a distance to embark have yet scarcely reached the shore, or are just appearing in view; and the landlord remains at his door until she has reached a certain spot, and then leaves it just in time to meet her by a leisurely walk. There is no hurry, because there is no irregularity and no uncertainty. She cuts the water, but with as little spray as a knife makes in dividing a loaf of bread. There is merely a little rising of the surface under the bow, the wheels scarcely splash the sides of the boat as they revolve, and the water joins again under the stern, leaving only a smooth cicatrice upon the surface. She approaches the shore like a hound nosing out his own kennel; her wheels desist, and she floats on silently as a feather. For a moment she stops to press against the wharf, and the post to which she is daily fastened: the wheels move gently back, and she is in her place. A little mustering is seen forward, about as much as is witnessed at a horse-shoeing at a country blacksmith's, and she is again on her way. Not a loud word has been spoken; yet in that busy moment, Mr. Smith's family have landed, with their fourteen trunks; Thomas Brown has saluted his wife, and bidden farewell till to-morrow; one has landed to shoot or fish in the neighbourhood, another has shipped his horse and gig for his own stable in the city, or a basket of beans for the market, while farewell is waved by friends and acquaintances to merchants, fishermen, and others, and the correspondence of the neighbourhood is thrown upon deck in the little mailbag. Away flies the boat, followed with a few nods and gazes, to return again at the fixed hour, and renew the scene.

CHAPTER VI.

The Sea-shore—Long Branch—Bathing—Scenery—Shipwrecks Forms of Danger and Modes of Escape.

Long Branch is a favourite resort to the citizens of New-York, and still more so to those of Philadelphia, although they have to perform a long monotonous ride, over a sandy path, across a pine plain to reach it, while the route from New-York is by steam, excepting four of the last miles. A description of the place may be given in a few words; yet nothing short of a visit to it, and a long familiarity with its aspect in different states of weather, will give any person an adequate idea of its attractions.

I had visited many points of our more northern sea-coast before I saw Long Branch, but had found none of them resembling it in all its striking characteristics. Here a smooth and handsome plain extends to the very borders of the sea. You have no indication of your approach to it in the bleak hills, beds of sand, masses of rock, or clusters of fishing-huts, which in other places generally prepare you for what you are to behold. On the contrary, when you look out from the hard-jolting Jersey wagon in which you are transported across the state, or from the steamboat-landing at Red Bank, you see retired farms or small villages, or more frequently a smooth road overshadowed by forest-trees, such as you would suppose might extend a hundred miles in any direction. You are surprised, therefore, when, as the horses turn in front of the hotel, you find the grassy plain suddenly terminating, and at the depth of forty feet beneath, observe the roar and tumult of the never-ceasing waves rolling from the very horizon.

Little arbours have been erected on the verge of the sandy precipice, furnished with seats, and covered with 4* 38 green boughs, where you may at any hour of a clear day enjoy an agreeable shade, and the sight of a white beach extending several miles to the right and left, continually lashed by the billows of the ocean. At night the scene is often still finer than by day; for then, the eyes being less called into requisition amid the general obscurity,

Library of Congress

the ear is more sensible to the sounds which fall upon it, and the feelings are in a singular manner affected by the roar, dashing, and concussions of near and distant waves. Some of these are dimly seen, and others only heard as they strike upon some more remote part of the shore.

The sandy precipice appears to be everywhere slowly crumbling and wearing away. Why it is able to resist at all the unintermitted violence of the immense power which is continually directed against it, is at first not easily explained. At this season of the year there is a beautiful bank of white sand formed for its protection, a little in advance, which extends with the greatest uniformity as far as the eye can reach, and suffers not a drop of the water to pass beyond it, except when the spray is driven much higher than usual during a violent easterly storm. In the warmer seasons, when you descend from the precipice, therefore, you find yourself for a moment shut out from the view of the ocean, by the intervention of the summit of this bank, which may be about twenty-five feet above the level of the water; and after surmounting that, you tread the hard beach, which descends with a smooth and gentle slope, and is swept every few seconds by another and another wave that here spends the force it has exerted, perhaps, over hundreds of miles of water without intermission. Nature never acts without doing something to gratify the taste of man, either for the beautiful or the sublime, and very often consults it in both. While the thundering roar of the sea was every moment striking upon my ears, and the successive deluges that flooded the lower part of the beach seemed sufficient to tear rocks in pieces, it was pleasing to see how effectually its violence was tamed, and its power harmlessly spent, by the ascent of the beach. By directing its course up an inclined plane, its impulse was gradually lost, and the water spontaneously sunk back, like a feeble child after an effort, falling again into the arms of its mother. The highest point gained by the strongest waves was marked by a waving line of sea-weeds, gracefully festooned on the smooth sand for miles in length. Children, who delight to gather shells from the brim of old ocean's bowl, may safely stray down to this line, and do often venture far below it; but sometimes our

Library of Congress

whole party was seen flying before a giant wave, which hurried at our heels, as if to terrify us for encroaching too far on the empire of the sea.

One great pleasure in visiting a scene like this, is to witness the natural influence which the aspects of the ocean have upon the human mind. The gay and young, who are brought in crowds by wealthy parents from the capitals, may stand side by side with the solitary invalid, or the fisherman's son, and all participate in the same feelings. We may hear of the good beds, the fine dinners, or sometimes of the choice wine furnished to visitors at Long Branch; but I am happy to believe that most of those who love the place love it for its natural, its real beauties, and go home better than they came. Certain it is, that friendships may be here cultivated which will be valuable elsewhere, and that impressions worth possessing may be communicated to the young and the old. The scenes which present themselves to the opening eye, and the sounds which strike upon the ear, tend to prepare the feelings for useful instructions; and if the parent seeks opportunities to convey them, a more favourable place could hardly be found among our fashionable resorts.

On this subject I may, perhaps, say something in the way of brief hints hereafter. For myself, unhappily, I did not come well provided with the means of self-instruction; but I cannot here stop to lament my ignorance or neglect, for I had soon other things to think of. I had descended to the beach with a company of bathers, and was deluged by a roaring wave that suddenly rolled up and engulfed us all. Then it was that I first fully realized the amount of water-power (as the too technical term is) which is constantly wasted upon the coast, and the cause of the 40 sand-banks which mark the margin of the ocean in all climates and regions. I was suddenly lifted up, rolled this way and that, and then drawn downwards by a force I had neither time, energy, nor skill enough to oppose, and felt for a moment as if I had owed my life to a neighbour who held me up by my bathing-robe. As the returning flood rushed by me, bushels of pebbles rolled rapidly over my naked feet and against my ancles, as if resolved to deprive me of my only support. Instead of retreating to dry ground, as I wished to do, my companions hurried much farther down, apparently drawing me with them, to meet another wave, which came foaming on more violently than

Library of Congress

its predecessor; and, before I had recovered from the stupifying effect of the former, I felt myself sealed up tighter and longer than before: eyes, ears, nose, mouth, breath, and all. How little like a man does a man feel in such circumstances! Plunged in an element foreign to his nature, the use of all his senses entirely suspended, unless the growling in the ears is to be called hearing, and the sensation of cold and wetness is feeling—the legs useless, because the feet are lifted above terra firma, or rather the sand and water moving below you! This is one of the cases in which a native American citizen may be suddenly disfranchised. What benefit did I derive at that time from my birth-right? Of what use was it to me that there were written laws, courts, jurors, lawyers, and judges, that I might have claimed the rights of a citizen in any state of the Union, when here, not twenty feet from high-water mark, I might be taken feloniously, with malice aforethought, and thrown into the jaws of such a beast of a billow, exposed to death, or at least put into great consternation? Is there no statute for such case made and provided? Is there no writ that will issue against the perpetrators of such an enormity? Who is safe? Who can boast of the privilege of existing in this republic, while the very judge on the bench, or just off it, if he happens to step into the water at Long Branch, may be thus suddenly deprived of every right dear to nature?

All this, and more, perhaps, passed through my mind while I remained submerged; but I can give no adequate idea of the state of desperation in which I remained, until I found my head above water, and felt at liberty to breathe, to look, and to speak. What I was prepared to say I need not here record, for it was never uttered. The power which had so unceremoniously drawn me into the water was not that of a rude companion, as I might have supposed, but the irresistible torrent which had also borne away my old friends. These now reappeared with me, and were standing beside me, overwhelmed with a torrent of laughter, and quite unable to answer my angry interrogatories. My vexation, perhaps, still more excited their mirth, which soon showed itself in a manner that I could not resist; and after forgetting my late embarrassment, I consented to descend once more into the brine, and had on the whole a delightful bath.

Library of Congress

By a remarkable provision of nature, which seems designed for benevolent purposes as well as that which has thrown up the sandbeach, a partial barricade of the same material is generally found heaped up by the waves at a considerable distance from the shore, over which the approaching billows first turn in foam, and begin to lose their force. Its position is marked by a white line, which the eye can trace for miles up and down, parallel to the sinuosities of the shore, and everywhere serving the same purpose. Such bars have sometimes proved of use, by receiving vessels when driving on towards a rocky shore before an irresistible storm; and many a published account of a shipwreck makes mention of them. In many cases, however, vessels have only remained upon these outer bars until so strained as to leak dangerously; and then, after being beaten over them by the force of repeated waves, have sunk before reaching the shore.

Every thing relating to shipwrecks is of interest along this coast, where multitudes of vessels of different sizes have been lost, and where fragments of old decks, spars, &c. furnish the scattering farm-houses with much of their fuel, and remind the visiter, during his strolls on the beach, of the dreadful disasters and sufferings of which it is almost annually the scene. As being wrecked is too often inevitable here, how to be wrecked most scientifically becomes a question of importance. Strange as it may sound, there is such a thing as running a ship on shore elegantly, and meriting the command of a larger vessel by losing a smaller one in the right manner. Suppose, for instance, that one of the ships frequently to be seen here on the horizon, instead of shunning this shore as they are fain to do, should be blown by an irresistible wind towards it, until it became evident that it must strike. It is now left to the master to determine whether she shall lie with her side or her stern to the waves after she has ceased to float. If that the flat stern should receive their full force, like St. Paul's ship at Melita, the vessel could not long resist the shocks, which are violent almost beyond calculation. If she should present her side in an inclined position, the waves would waste a part of their force upon it as they do upon the beach; but then the condition of the crew would be forlorn, as the sea must make what is called a fair breach over her. But there is a possibility, in some cases, by the exercise of much skill,

Library of Congress

of laying a ship ashore in a still more favourable position, viz. so that the waves shall strike her bows and cut themselves in two. If the captain and his men retain their self-possession to the last moment, the vessel may possibly be made to wear just before she strikes, and touch the ground stern first. If after this she is not turned too far by the wind or the sea, her situation is tolerably comfortable for a desperate one. But then other dangers are to be apprehended. A ship seldom is materially injured by the first contact with the ground; but terrible leaks are often produced afterward by her being repeatedly lifted up by the waves and dropped again upon the hard bottom by their sudden retiring. If, after this, as has been already remarked, she is carried into deep water, unless the pumps can keep her hold from filling too fast, she must sink, and probably every person on board, as well as the cargo, will go down with her.

In several instances, which were mentioned to me by some of the older inhabitants of this dangerous coast, the tops of masts peeping out of the water between the shoal and the beach, have given the first intimation of melancholy midnight-wrecks. It is comparatively more common, I believe, 43 on approaching the shore in the morning, to see some fine vessel fixed upon the shoal, with her spars partly gone, and partly loaded with signals of distress, and her decks either crowded with anxious sufferers, or swept of those who might have told of the events of the night.

But the danger above mentioned is sometimes passed in safety. Some vessels are borne over the shoal with greater or less injury, and landed, not gently, perhaps, but permanently, upon the beach, which now presents to our eyes so fine a sight, so safe and beautiful a walk. But ah! how different a spot to them, when the fury of an equinoctial storm is raging, which every autumn drives back the beach some sixty or eighty feet, so that the slope commences at the sandy cliff itself, over which the billows attempt to break, and which is often rendered almost unapproachable by the spray.

When a vessel has once been thrown upon this beach, the danger of sinking is past, and the ocean immediately begins to employ itself actively for the security of the vessel and

Library of Congress

cargo, as well as for the protection of those on board against further damage. The force of the wind, and still more that of successive waves, is employed to push it further and further up the acclivity, and nearer to the dry land; and after the hull has remained stationary for a short time, a stronger wave rolls in, which rises higher than its immediate predecessors, holds it an instant afloat again, and thrusts it unceremoniously a little further up the steep; then retiring, leaves it, perhaps, in the spot where it is to fall piece-meal, and where its keel is to decay. Besides the power of the waves rolling in from the ocean, the shipwrecked vessel and her unfortunate crew find benefit from their retirement: for as each wave flows back again down the descending beach, it bears rapidly over its smooth surface cart-loads of the loose pebbles and sand which so much incommode the inexperienced bather. Their quantity, and the size of the beach-stones, are increased by the violence of the waves in a gale, and the process of grinding gravel into sand is vastly facilitated. This mass of moving substances is ready to accumulate rapidly against every 44 obstacle that is fixed sufficiently to resist it in its descent; and no sooner is a vessel left to rest upon the beach, than a bank begins to be formed of sand and stones deposited there by the retiring waves. A causey thus self-constructed from the wreck to the shore has in some instances offered the crew the earliest means of escape; and in particular circumstances may have proved their only safety. If a vessel should thus be thrown upon a beach when the tide is near its ebb, and the bank be formed in time to allow the crew opportunity to escape over it to the land at low water, they would be saved the hazards attending another flood-tide, the floating of the ship again, with perhaps a change of wind that might drive it into deep water and sink it: to say nothing of a prolonged exposure to wet, cold, fear, fatigue, and hunger.

The ship which has been thrown upon such a beach as this, nearly at the height of the tide, and for which the sea is rapidly constructing an embankment to the shore, is perhaps in the most favourable and hopeful condition in which a wreck can be situated. Yet how replete with inconveniences, with distresses and dangers, is such a situation to those on board! The disaster may have occurred within a brief hour of the time when the crew had indulged sanguine hopes of escape from serious injury by the storm, or when,

Library of Congress

after prolonged labours, sufferings, and apprehensions, they have neither physical nor mental energy to endure their present trials, or to avail themselves of any favourable circumstances in their situation. They are probably ignorant of the coast on which they are thrown, and involved in the obscurity of an atmosphere troubled with tempests, surcharged with mist, rain, or flying spray, and perhaps darkened by night. Thus the mariner is often kept in anxious suspense, and apprehends the utmost danger even when his escape is almost secured. Sometimes, acting under ill-founded apprehensions of their prospects, lives have been unnecessarily exposed and sacrificed; boats have been prematurely launched and swamped on spots which in a short time might have been passed on foot dry-shod. But how can men be expected always to form and act upon correct opinions, in circumstances so trying and so doubtful? Who can distinguish between a thousand different parts of our coast, even in the clearest weather, and when sailing safely and prosperously by, even with time to reflect, and to consult books and charts? The hundreds of miles which intervene along the Atlantic border from near Sandy Hook to the Cape of Florida, present, with but few exceptions, one uniform appearance: low lands and swamps faced with beaches, over which a forest alone is generally distinguishable, with no prominent mountains or conspicuous capes to give bearings, and few secure harbours to offer a refuge. This singular part of the coast, at Long Branch and its vicinity, extending for about six miles, is said to be distinguished by one peculiarity, from every other part of the seaboard of the United States. Here alone the arable land extends to the very verge of Neptune's domains, and here are seen the only corn-fields whose outer rows are salted by the spray of the ocean. But this trait, however agreeable and striking to the land traveller, and valuable to the farmer who reaps the harvests, affords little advantage to the navigator in enabling him to ascertain his position.

How important are some of the devices which the humane and ingenious have invented for the rescue of their fellow-beings exposed to death by shipwreck! "I have both talked and written to men of influence," said a plain farmer of this vicinity to me, "on the importance of supplying us with the means of saving men from death, who are every

Library of Congress

season cast within our view, in the midst of perils which they might escape with our aid, if we had a simple apparatus placed at our command, by which a rope might be thrown from a gun to a ship on shore." Repeated instances he referred to, in which crews had been lost within a short distance of the land, in most, if not all of which, he felt confident, such an apparatus might have been effectual. The result of his remarks was to convince me, that the subject is of sufficient importance to justify the appropriation of a liberal sum of money by our government, to inquire for facts and opinions, and to make experiments. If it should be judged practicable, after this, another appropriation should be made to carry 5 46 a good plan into effect. Whatever the apparatus might be, whether life-boats of the best construction, or guns, or mortars for throwing ropes, it should be mounted on carriages, supplied with harness, and placed in the charge of some humane and responsible individual, or at the direction of the town-authorities. From the interest felt by the respectable inhabitants of this part of the coast, in the safety of men, and sometimes females, thus exposed to desperate hazards and sufferings under their eyes, I am persuaded that the most laudable exertions would ever be made for their safety. For my own part, if I were to be shipwrecked, I would willingly trust myself to the care of the hardy and humane individuals whom I have known in this vicinity. Those alone who have had experience in the delicate task of conducting a common boat through the surf and over the breakers, can now be trusted to transport men to the land, even when the sea is but in a moderate state of agitation; but if life-boats were at hand, other arms might be employed in an emergency, beside those of the most skilful fishermen.

CHAPTER VII.

New-York—Books—The Apparatus of Literature—Conversations with Booksellers on Public Taste, &c.—A Friend returned from a Tour to Europe—Foreign Feelings and Ignorance respecting America—Varying aspects of the Streets of the Metropolis—Impressions from observing them.

Library of Congress

It is strange to see how much better the public taste is often understood by booksellers than authors; and with what certainty they can sometimes foretel the fate of a book after hearing only a brief description of it, or after glancing at the table of contents or the title-page, than the man who studied and laboured over the pages for months or years, and lay awake whole nights to cut and piece it in conformity with the state of society. This fact, which no one can doubt after proper inquiry, is so much in opposition to common rules applying to other subjects, that I sought light on it while in New-York. We always should expect to find a tailor better acquainted with the size of his customers' shoulders than anybody else, and more likely to discover whether a coat be too narrow to fit, too long in the sleeves, or too tight under the arms. But it is not so with your author and his work. He deliberates for weeks or months upon his subject, then upon his plan, then on the size of his book, the mode and time for its appearance; and after having fixed all these, and changed his intention over and over again, and at length completed his work as he finally determines, he is the most anxious man in the nation till he ascertains whether he has succeeded or failed. This he now feels utterly unable to judge of, until he has facts to form an opinion upon, and actually sees whether or not his book has sold. But not so with the bookseller. He has rules, or instinct, or some other guide, by which he, often can judge of the fate of a work, before it has been grasped after or rejected by a single customer; and, as if by some secret electricity, a uniform presentiment concerning a book sometimes pervades the whole trade from the moment of its appearance, or even from a very early period after its announcement.

There are cases in which they have experience to refer to, and then they may prejudice as we might the shoemaker, who had pinched us in the toes, and was about to shoe a neighbour with still larger feet than our own. But, in the great majority of cases, the bulk of the booksellers do not know the author, or are not well acquainted with the subject on which he writes, or both, and therefore cannot judge of what is to come from what has happened.

Library of Congress

To show what kind of satisfaction I got from some conversation on books during my stay in New-York, I will give a brief recapitulation of what I heard in some of the printing-offices and book-stores. Some of these are exceedingly large and rich; and the grand review of the whole typographic park and batteries of the capital is worthy of the attention of an intelligent traveller. The most magnificent 48 presses in the world are racking and groaning in a hundred different streets, from Messrs. Harper's mammoth power-press downwards, like so many mills for grinding the wheat, bran, and shorts with which even the almost insatiable literary appetite of the American public is surfeited. The four or five principal stereotype-foundries are also very large establishments, some of which are connected with type-foundries, and printing-offices of twenty and thirty presses.

"My friend," said a most intelligent and virtuous South American just from Europe, on entering a spacious room where two rows of men were casting types in the old way, one at a time; "my friend, despotism will never prevail against us." On being introduced, however, into a place where twenty boys, with machines, were doing the work of forty men, he was lost in surprise and pleasure, and declared that he almost pitied the poor despots who had to contest against such weapons so rapidly forged, and so irresistible. The truth is, we ought to exhibit the press to our children, as a machine little understood, and consequently much abused. It would be an improving lesson to every child to be led to the village printing-office once a year, and hear comments on the nature, history, and uses of this great implement of civilization, morality, and religion.

But to return to book-store conversation. "Have you seen the new number of this magazine? It is astonishingly popular. The publisher had but one course to pursue, and he took the right one. He had not capital enough to spend a large sum at once, to pay an editor of known talents, and therefore could not expect his support from the learned. So he got it up as handsomely as he knew how, and has taken measures to have it well puffed in the newspapers. The consequence is, that he has had great success." I saw this publisher; and remarked to him that his merits, as I had understood, were generally acknowledged.

Library of Congress

Yes, he replied, he had taken good care about that. It would be in vain, he said, if any man should expect his works to be esteemed, if the newspapers did not commend them over and over again; and to secure this end means must be used. 49 “If I should lie down under my counter, and expect the public to give me credit for my merits, they would never know or care whether I had any or not. They would not know whether it was a man or a dog there in the dark. So I have given my numbers as good an appearance and as great a variety as possible, and now shall be able to do what I please, with such patronage as I enjoy.” I expressed a hope that his periodical would soon aim to exceed the best of its class in other countries. Yes, he hoped it would be an honour to our own, by having no superior in the world. He had taken great pains to get such paper as is used in England, and was to put a cover on the next number of the same colour and devices as the London —, which was extremely elegant, and universally admired. Literature, thought I, has abundant reason to smile at her prospects in America, or rather to laugh at them! Lucky that none of the foreign tourists were present to tell this story abroad!

“You may blame us as much as you please,” said another publisher; “I have no more public spirit, perhaps, than the rest of my craft, but I have at least no objection to my books having real merit, or to their being written by Americans. At any rate, I have made some exertions to secure both, and paid a good deal of money. But all the blame does not rest with us. We must sell our books, or we must stop printing: that is very clear. If then there is nobody to inform the public of the merits of different works, how will they ever know them? You literary gentlemen do not establish reviews in which the public place much confidence, and, what is worse, you do not read one half the books which appear while they are fresh, as you say, for want of time. You must settle that with your consciences—I do not pretend to judge you. You will not attempt to improve or even to direct public taste, and have left it to itself and to us. Now judge whether we have done our duty better than yourselves or not. We had to begin with a low taste, and have had to raise it, if it has been raised. Well, we did it in what we believe to be the only way in our power. We have always endeavoured to print as good books as the public could be brought to read, and have

Library of Congress

more than once 5* 50 overshot our mark, perhaps, without ever falling below it. The result thus far has been a perceptible and general improvement in certain classes of books; and as we are encouraged in pursuing our course, we intend to persist in it, and hope to see still more important results.

“But to give you an idea,” continued the bookseller, “of the form and circumstances under which public taste appears to our craft. A publisher, perhaps, pays a young man who has a profession and leisure a hundred dollars to make a volume of newspaper scraps, and put some odd name to it: or he'll meet with a manuscript of the Adventures of Timothy Terrible, or some other well-known individual, and will bargain with the author for it. By the time it has been out a fortnight, we have orders for the whole edition, and half another. A correspondent writes from the South,—The fifty Timothy T. received, and please send us seventy-five more. From the North we get,—Please send, on receipt of this, one hundred copies of Tim. Terrible.—P.S. By first boat.

“Well, we think we'll try a little more American literature, as that appears to be rising. Come, we'll give 'em something a little solid. So we come out, we will suppose, with a learned work on the History, Character, and Condition of the Crim Tartars, past, present, and to come; and almost simultaneously with the Life and Writings of General Somebody, one of the greatest men in our Republican history, the property of the nation. For each of these we'll suppose we pay eight hundred dollars,—cash, you understand. Well, our customers, in about ten days, begin to write,—Send us no more Generals or Crim Tartars. They don't go down.—N.B. Too dry and too true. Gentlemen, we send you back forty-nine Crim Tartars and all the Generals. They don't suit our market. Now mind, here's two octavo volumes: investment on each about three thousand, yes, thirty-five hundred dollars, including copy-right. Well, they are good books, that is, so people say; and they sell easy along, one here and one there. But here comes in old Squire Jones, or Colonel West, or some such gentleman, and takes one of these books. ‘Well,’ he says, ‘here's a work 51 I'm glad to see. I know the author, sir, and he's man of sterling merit. Why I knew him when your father was so high. Yes, sir, that book ought to sell—it will sell—don't you find it so?’

Library of Congress

‘Why, yes, colonel, I suppose it would, if everybody had your penetration. How many shall I send you?’ ‘Oh, oh, why, I don't know, I have no time to read just now; but perhaps I'll call in some time when I have. I suppose I can get it any day this month, can't I?’ ‘Yes, I'm afraid so, or next year either.’ Well, Dr. Studios expresses his pleasure at the appearance of a book so profound on the Crim Tartars. ‘Come here, sir, I'll sit down and tell you what I know about the author and his faithful investigations into his subject.’ ‘Why, doctor,’ says I, ‘I think you had better read the book, and give me a short pithy recommendation of it for the information of the public. My own opinion is already made up.’ ‘Why, sir,’ says the doctor, ‘I have a share in a library, where I expect to find it; and if I should want it, perhaps you'll have a cheaper edition by-and-by.’

“Now so it goes; and while I'm talking with one of the learned gentlemen, two or three men come in, and want eight or ten Timothy Terribles a piece; and the amount of it is, that while we must wait two or perhaps three years to get a profit of six or seven hundred dollars on an investment of thirty-five hundred, in six months we run off two editions of a work that we've got up for six hundred dollars each, and have cleared, perhaps, a thousand, besides the stereo-type-plates ready for more. Encouraging solid literature and American authors is a good thing to talk about, it sounds very well; and I should like much to practise it more and more. It is easy to say, O, its all the publisher's fault,—you've no business to print such trash, and you should not go out of the country so much for books. But here you see are the facts. Now what are you going to do in such a case?

“Go and ask the learned and the good, the intelligent and the influential, why they can't take the trouble to examine works as they appear, or before, and let their countrymen know which are good and which bad. A few 52 just commendations would seal the success of good works and good writers, now overlooked and unknown; and a few good death-blows against bad books would kill, along with the works, their authors, and perhaps the taste which sustains them.”

Library of Congress

“I want ten Timothy Terrible,” said a customer, interrupting the speaker. “Excuse me, sir,” said he, breaking off, “for talking so long about this matter. I only want to let you understand that it is not all the fault of the book-sellers. Hadn't you better take twenty copies, sir?”

An intelligent, pure, and Warm-hearted friend, just landed from Europe, grasped my hand at a corner. Amid the bustle of Broadway, he had recognised my countenance; and out of the thousands of names which must have struck his ears since we had met, he found mine ready on his tongue, like one still near his heart. What feelings such a meeting excites. How gratifying to find such a friend, though changed, yet the same. His observant eyes, how much they must have seen; his discriminating and original mind, how much it must have accomplished in dividing the gold from the dross; his rich memory, how its stores must have been enlarged! His grasp and his eye told how foreign scenes had warmed his heart for home, and assured me that I had a key to all its treasures.

“The view I have taken of Europe,” said he, “has put my mind into new trains of thought, in which I have been indulging during my voyage homeward. And what a companion is the sea, what associates are the waves and storms for one who is occupied with subjects of interest and importance! The United States, imperfectly known as they are, exercise a most powerful sway upon the most influential minds of Europe. They constantly contemplate us, and admire and hope, through a crooked glass and misty air. Their views are very imperfect; their conceptions crude and often erroneous; and we have as much reason, perhaps, to regret the over-estimates made of us on some points, as the oversight of our advantages or merits on others. I regret to say that the best informed men of Britain appear, so far as I can speak from knowledge, exceedingly ill acquainted with the geography as well as the institutions and state of society in this country. We are, indeed, perhaps, too much inclined to be surprised at this and to pity it. We converse of England with every advantage, because our very schoolbooks, as well as our libraries, were English, until within our own recollection; and many of us in our earliest years were

Library of Congress

taught more of their history, geography, biography, and even ecclesiastical and political affairs, than of our own. But their course of education, in all its grades, has little more reference to America than it had before Columbus sailed from Spain. Their instructors want teaching before they can be competent on this branch of knowledge; and whence then is it possible for the people to be well informed of our condition? Our teachers, on the contrary, our fathers and our countrymen, until recently, have directed almost all their attention to foreign lands, and read only foreign books. When therefore intelligent men in England, Scotland, and Ireland expressed their surprise at my familiarity with English books and men, the geography and scenery of the country, I could not but feel that they over-estimated it, because they contrasted it with their own ignorance of America.

“We ought to exert ourselves more than we do to inform our European brethren concerning our country and ourselves, to remove erroneous impressions, and prevent their falling into new mistakes. But how shall this be done? Shall we send them our periodical publications or our books? Which of them would do us justice, and at the same time be instructive to them? In far too many of our writers an affectation of foreign sentiments and foreign style removes every American feature from their productions, while in others the perverted views and degraded language of the low level from which they have lately risen would at once mislead and disgust a person seeking for information concerning our state and society. Some publications we have of an elevated tone, and a just and commanding influence at home and abroad. But these are either scientific or devoted to literature in general, or at least so much more designed for the use of ourselves than of others, that they would not 54 serve their purpose. Foreigners are ignorant of the very elements of our society. They need to know the individuals of whom it is composed, and comprehend the mutual action and reaction of domestic life and the public institutions. They can neither conjecture at the application of our laws to our circumstances, nor understand what were the circumstances which required them; much less can they explain the effects which are produced. They wonder at us, as at a new specimen of mechanism; and our country excites as ill-defined admiration as did the ship *May-flower* among the

Library of Congress

Indians of Massachusetts Bay, when the Pilgrims arrived on the coast. They are slow to ascertain the causes of its motion, and never can resolve the forces by which it is impelled. Still, here is the object constantly before them; and the more they gaze the more they are interested. Now I do not see how they are to be taught, otherwise than as an apprentice learns his trade. Familiarize them with the ordinary details, as we are familiarized with our own society in childhood. Do we not understand Scottish life at different periods of history, through the familiar scenes presented by Scott, better than we could learn them from almost any investigation we might make into history and legislation? Let some of their intelligent men come and spend months in our families, conforming to the customs of the people, and observing, without preconceived opinions, how society goes on. After sufficient attention to the practical operation of our system, they would be able to enlighten others in the grammar of our society. Until this, or some equally simple and sensible measure shall be adopted, we shall be overrated by some, underrated by many, and annually inspected by tourists, who will by turns make us laughing-stocks and objects of disgust to ourselves and others.

“But, seriously, this subject has struck me with much force. All misrepresentations of us are injurious at home and abroad. It is of immense consequence to the world, that all mankind should see what we know of the success with which political, civil, and religious liberty have been put to in effectual, harmonious, and most happy operation among 55 us. They ought to know,—what they certainly would if they knew us well,—that all men may live in the enjoyment of a similar state of society, whenever circumstances shall enable them to try it. They would see, too, that our system is not necessarily unfriendly to learning in any of its degrees; that influence is not necessarily denied to the good and allowed to the bad; that the tendency of things in any respect is not to degradation. On the contrary, they would learn that knowledge and virtue, being indispensable to the state, and vice and debasement of every kind dangerous to private, because to public interests, the strongest motives exist in such a country to cultivate the purest virtue, and to diffuse the utmost knowledge, while facilities, before unknown, are daily offered for the propagation of both.

CHAPTER VIII.

New-York continued—Foreign Residents and Visitors—Foreign Books.

New-york is, indeed, multum in parvo, and contains not only individuals from most of the travelling nations of the earth, but societies of French, Spaniards, Germans, Italians, &c., of considerable extent. For these and others there are particular haunts. it is no longer necessary to go abroad to see the habits of Europeans: by proper means, a gentleman may procure an introduction to respectable and friendly foreign residents, whose domestic arrangements show much of the peculiarities of their respective countries; while at several boarding-houses, hotels, and eating-houses, by taking a single meal, you may get a lively sketch of several distant countries at a time. The latest comers from Europe and Asia are generally to be seen or heard of at Delmonico's in the course of "ordinary" hours; and a person has only to keep his eyes and ears open to get 56 some of the ideas they bring with them of the countenance, dress, language, manners, and habits of many of his brethren of the human race whom he will never see. Now and then an individual may be found among our countrymen who takes peculiar pleasure in bringing such peculiarities to light.

Such was an old bachelor I could name, of an apparently ascetic character, who always looks grave, and never smiles. He is very thin, with a sour look, and goes wrapped up carefully to the ears, so that he seems to be always cold, let the weather be never so pleasant, and displeased even if things go on never so well. He takes pains to draw foreigners into conversation by using some word in their language in speaking to a waiter; and, though he cannot speak a sentence in any foreign tongue, with attentive looks and occasional grunts and nods, makes them suppose he comprehends all they say, and will sometimes sit and hear one talk a half hour without betraying his ignorance of what is spoken.

Library of Congress

Others, and more rational men, I have known, who liked occasionally to resort to such places to familiarize themselves with the languages and habits of different countries. This may be made a useful practice; for as the mind improves by exercise, so does the heart by expanding its feeling, and indulging benevolence towards many and various subjects. No one can spend a few moments in the society of intelligent and virtuous foreigners, without strongly realizing that the study of man is to be pursued among our species, and not in a library. There is often great exposure to the youth in bringing him into contact unguardedly with all foreigners he may meet; but if he is to be taught living languages, I would by all means put him among persons of pure character who speak them, that he might apply his views to a legitimate object, viz. the acquisition of valuable facts.

One is not likely to realize the number of books in foreign languages annually demanded in our country, until he surveys such of the stores as are principally devoted to the sale of them. Compared with floods of our own books, it is true they form but a small stream; but yet they are more numerous than would be supposed. It is a pity that there are among them so many of the vicious French novels; but it might be expected that the injudicious instruction of so many of our youth in a language, which is improperly regarded by many parents as a merely ornamental accomplishment, without any care being taken to make it an introduction to profitable associates or useful books, would naturally lead too many to dangerous sources of amusement. The truth probably is, that many a French author, unintelligible to the parent, is in the hands of a child whose fondness for it arises from a less commendable source than a love of gaining knowledge. O, this business of learning modern languages is full of abuses. One abuse, however, sometimes prevents a greater one. It is a comfort, in this view, to reflect, that probably not one in ten of those who pretend to learn French ever reads it; and not one in fifty, perhaps, ever speaks it.

A great deal of science comes into the country in French books, and our physicians are, to a good extent, I believe, benefited by it, and of course the people. From Germany we now import a great many Greek, Latin, and Hebrew works at very low prices, so that multitudes

Library of Congress

of instructors, students, and private gentlemen are, and many more may be, furnished with classics, and the Scriptures, in their originals, for moderate sums, which would have been most cheerfully paid by some of my friends in years past, and sufficed to fill libraries which were unfortunately too empty. Whenever Hebrew, Greek, and Latin shall be as generally taught, as easily learnt, and as practically used as they may be, the supply of this branch of literature must be swelled many times beyond its present bounds.

The French and German novels form a pernicious mass of books, of vast amount, annually disgorged by the press, upon a world that is rendered the more truly poor the richer it is in such productions. The German light literature (as it is called), thanks to their sublimated and ghost-making brains, is so strange and uncouth that it can scarcely be brought to touch this world, and therefore produces but little direct evil influence upon men's lives. Their novels tend to draw off the mind to "nonentities and quiddities;" and as it is chiefly objects of sense which, when improperly presented, tend to evil, there is a negative advantage in those ridiculous phantasies which possess no positive excellence. To look at the machinery of such works, you might think them weapons raised to afflict the world; but they are so crooked and wavering in the hand, that it is but seldom they can be made to hit it to injure. Their writers waste time, it is true, for their readers; and by removing the enclosures and land-marks of probability and common sense, turn minds, like cattle, into estrays; but still they do not infuriate and madden them as the novel-writers of France. Many of these are notoriously vicious and corrupting at the present day; for coming down to society as it is, packing off ghosts, and releasing virtues, vices, and epithets from the personifications in which they have been bound by the Germans, they lead up the most corrupt characters, arrayed in attractive garbs, and think that whoever can sugar over the blackest fiend can make the best book. Booksellers themselves, who deal out such works to our public, sometimes shudder, like apothecaries, at the deadly nature of their poisonous wares.

I visited a vessel just from Scotland, with about one hundred and fifty passengers; and, oh! the inquiries concerning friends, and news, and luggage, and children,—all in a broad

Library of Congress

dialect! And then the groups of Swiss and German emigrants who move about in strange raiment, generally taking the middle of the streets, in Indian file, gazing, but, from their frequency, no longer a gazing-stock—cocked hats, long queues, breeches justified on round their haunches, as if never to come off. I have heard people complain in this country of what “poor folks” must do. But in Europe they find, through necessity, they can do ten times more. I saw one day a crowd in the street, caused by a momentary obstruction. I examined it in passing, and found that an Alsatian woman, with a monstrous bundle upon her head, and an infant in her arms, had suddenly stopped to pin the frock of one of the children who were accompanying her; 59 and this she at length effected with all her embarrassments, and proceeded as if it were no extraordinary thing.

When we observe the movements of men near at hand, the motives of their exertions and the results in which they end often excite our laughter; while, if we contemplate them from a distance, and especially in large bodies, there is often something impressive and even exalted in the emotions which we experience. The very greatness of the mass, like the mountain or the sea, swells the mind which embraces it, and keeps its faculties, like so many arms and hands, in a state of tension, which, if not distressing, is at least so tiresome as to remove all disposition to ridicule. When we descend to some little subject, the mind finds its powers in a great measure unoccupied; and as this is an unnatural state, it seeks employment in making deeper investigations and new combinations, which, in the case of a subject abounding in such self-contradictions and unreasonableness as man, must inevitably lead one to pity and another to ridicule. Historians and warriors understand this matter, and endeavour to keep the eye of the world or of posterity fixed upon men in masses, or on individuals at a distance. They often obscure, conceal, patch up, or pervert the truth, by representing the individuals in any thing but their every-day dress.

There is much that is ludicrous in the motley crowds rushing through Broadway at different hours; but when the city is seen in one view, the sight is a solemn one. If you are called to depart, or if you by any chance arrive, in the dead of night, the vacancy and silence of the streets are exceedingly impressive. Two hundred and forty thousand people obeying the

Library of Congress

laws of nature at least in repose. The dead of night, strictly speaking, lasts but a very short time in the principal thoroughfares; for the termination of the play at about twelve, and of fashionable parties at one, keeps up a rumbling of carriages for an hour or two, until the most remote routes have been performed, and the horses are returned to their stables. After this is over, half hours and even hours of almost total silence sometimes intervene, while the watchman, in the dome of the City Hall, proclaims to the ears of the sick and the watchful that another day is approaching, whether desired or apprehended by them.

A cannon is fired at break of day on Governor's Island; but before this the lines of milk, bread, and butchers' carts are in motion, and some come rattling down the island from above, while others are collecting at the ferries on the Long Island and Jersey shores, and all are soon dinning the streets. From the heights of Brooklyn you may hear their rattling, increasing from feeble beginnings, until, joined by the drays proceeding from the north to the south part of the city to their stands, it swells into an unintermitted roar, like the sound of Niagara at Queenston, to stop not till midnight. Some time after daylight, while the lamps at the steamboat docks are still glimmering, and those in the streets which, by mistake, have had oil enough, the first smoke begins to rise from the houses of labourers in the upper wards. Some five or ten early risers are just putting sparks to wood or coal; and their example is so contagious, that fires are speedily blazing in every house and almost every chimney in the city. In the cold season this is a singular sight; and when the wind is from the south in the morning, the heavy cloud which generally overhangs the city is blown northward, leaving the Battery in the light of the sun, while many of the other parts are deeply obscured. Soon after sunrise, floods of daily emigrants from the upper wards, meeting at Broadway and Canal-street, pour down to the wharves, the mechanics' shops, and the houses in building, many of them with convenient little tin-kettles, containing their dinners and preparations for heating them, all bound to their work. Then come the clerks of all degrees, the youngest generally first: and these, in an hour or thereabouts, give place to their masters, who flow down with more dignity, but scarcely less speed, to the counting-rooms of the commercial streets, hundreds of them, especially in unfavourable

Library of Congress

weather, in the omnibuses, which render the street so dangerous now and at three or four o'clock in the afternoon. Ere these crowds have disappeared, they become crossed and mingled with some of the fourteen thousand children who go to the public and primary schools at nine, and an unknown number who frequent the private schools of all sorts. Then are seen also the students of Columbia College and the University, the medicals in winter hurrying to Barclay-street, lawyers, clients, and witnesses gathering about the City Hall, the Marine, and Ward Courts, with a set of spectators generally selected from those classes who have been ruined by the same process which is about to be repeated in the name of the State. A burnt child dreads the fire, but a singed cat loves the chimney-corner.

The apple-women and orange-men at St. Paul's see a motley crowd passing from ten till twelve; and if it be a showery day, the shop-keepers have a good deal of conversation with chance visitors stepping in for shelter. After this, if the sky permits (for bad walking is but a small objection), the fashionable promenading begins; and the window-glass has full employment in reflecting the forms and colours of dresses which vary with the moon. The movements of the crowd are now at common time, instead of the double quick step by which the business-man is distinguished. A stranger would think that New-York was a city of idleness, gayety, and wealth. But let him turn down almost any street at the right or left, and enter some of the dwellings of the industrious poor, and he would find all were not rich or unoccupied; let him glance at the chambers of others, and he would be convinced that some are wretched and in want of all things. Yet he need not blame too severely the gay and young for being so regardless of the sufferers near them; they know not of their existence, or realize not their own ability to aid them. All parents do not estimate the value of engrafting practical and systematic benevolence upon their plan of education, and rather teach their children by example to despise the poor, than to regard them as beings offering occasions of moral self-improvement to the rich.

But it would be too long to tell all the aspects and fluctuations of the currents for a single day in the capital, or even to trace the course of a single drop, like myself, circulating one tour round the system. It is enough that the clocks and watches go on with their seconds

Library of Congress

and hours as if they marked no appointments for friendly or formal visits; no 6* 62 periods of payment, for persons who would prefer to keep their sixpences or their thousands; no departures or arrivals of cargoes, no changes in stocks—in short, as if prosperity or adversity, wealth or poverty, joy or disappointment were not decided by every revolution of the hands for thousands of anxious individuals.

It is a solemn reflection, after the bustle has passed, and the traveller again contemplates empty streets and noiseless pavements, deserted stores and silent wharves, while weary bones are resting, the anxious busy at their dreams, and the sick and dying, or their attendants, alone conscious of the hour, that two hundred and forty thousand persons have spent another day. The time has rapidly passed, but in it how many millions of property have changed hands; what applications of capital have been determined upon, which will increase the comforts of whole districts of country; what plans have been devised by consummate commercial skill; how many a generous deed has been done with wealth honourably obtained; how many a piece of gold added to the miser's hoard! In that short space of time how many a tear has been shed by parting friends; how many a smile made by those who have returned; how many a foreigner has first touched the soil of America; how many a traveller, like me, has closed his visit to this busy city!

CHAPTER IX.

Fashions and old Fashions in Travelling—New-York Harbour—Retreat of Washington's Army from Long Island—The East River—Low State of Agriculture caused by our defective Education—Hell Gate—Long Island Sound.

The rapidity of our steamboats and railroad cars deprive us of a great many interesting sights and agreeable reflections, and prevent us from becoming particularly acquainted with any part of our country. The improved vehicles undoubtedly 63 have their advantages; but while I acknowledge this evident fact, I am not forgetful of those belonging to the old and slower modes. I am fond indeed, now and then, when time permits, and an interesting

Library of Congress

region invites, of leaving every thing which modern fashion approves in the traveller, and betaking myself to a country stage-coach or a farmer's wagon, and feel delight in the rattling wheels and the healthful jolting motion of a stony hill; and sometimes like to mount the saddle, and take the road at break of day, or set off on foot in company with some chance fellow-traveller, to earn an appetite by a long walk before breakfast. I am so unfortunate as to have sprung from a race of early risers, unacquainted with the luxuries of morning naps, and suffer from an infirmity that makes me love morning air and athletic exercise. I can congratulate a city friend on the certain prospect he has that his children will never know so lamentable a state of existence as that in which I find myself, when I hanker after pure breezes and dewy fields in one of my paroxysms, and when so far from finding sympathy for my afflictions, can scarcely make anybody understand what I mean when I talk about it. My city friends, I may well say, have no reason to apprehend that they or any of their descendants will ever be exposed to such a malady: it is not in their blood, and the name of it is unknown in their vocabulary, else so rich in asthenic terms. Even those whose scientific repast it is to converse of all diseases, from the corn produced by fashionable shoes to the distorted spine, and the head deformed in infancy by lying on one side, while the nurse was asleep, and the mother at the theatre, even they know not the complaint to which I am liable.

I have said a great deal about myself, and the nondescript disorder with which I am affected; and yet I have not told the extent to which it sometimes proceeds: for there might be danger that instead of being gratified with my loved country retreats in the spring, I should be packed off at once, as a confirmed Bedlamite, to a hospital. To strangers, however, I may confess, that one reason why I sometimes shun fashionable vehicles in my journeys is, that I wish to avoid fashionable society, and revive the memory of past days, and of men who have long since ceased to tread the world. I confess that this fact is sufficient to forfeit for me all claim to fashionable esteem.

What! prefer the history of our grandfathers, that plain, unornamented, unsophisticated set, who were too straight-forward to allow of any variety in their existence, and so undeviating

Library of Congress

in habits as to admit of nothing romantic: that race, so profoundly ignorant of modern refinements, so stubbornly attached to simple habits and plain speech, and the least worthy of the exalted, the *fashionable* generation which has succeeded it!

These remarks may prepare my readers for my singular voyage down Long Island Sound. This I undertook in a sloop, which having unloaded a cargo of wood, was on her return to the mouth of Connecticut River. The last time I had come up the Sound I had travelled in a steamboat, and at such a rate as to regret our swift speed, while others around were condemning the machinery, the boiler, the hull, the mechanics who had done their best to produce a racer, and the master and men who navigated her. Feeling in the humour for an old-fashioned passage through the East River, I was pleased to find a vessel so much to my mind, and flattered myself that, with the wind then blowing, I should be able to scan the shores at my leisure. I looked at the round bows of the sloop, and then at the old sails and the light-handed crew. By beating with a long leg and a short one, she might tack and tack without making too much head-way, and perhaps reach Throg's Neck in time to wait for the morning tide; that is, after a passage of about six hours. The steamboat which I might have chosen moved off and out of sight, while our hopeful crew were waiting to see a Frenchman's monkeys stop dancing on the dock, after which,—and fifteen minutes spent in rolling up sleeves and shoving the sloop out,—we committed ourselves to the deep.

It would take me long to describe the appearance of Brooklyn Heights at sunset, as seen from certain points on the water below, or to convey to a stranger an idea of its 65 still more delightful aspect to one who at sunrise walks along its then shady paths. Though, like the beautiful shades of Hoboken, they are often crowded in the afternoon; like them they are unseen and unthought of in the morning, when only they are truly delightful. The Bay of New-York is often compared with that of Naples; and from expressions I have seen in some of the newspapers (which are admitted to be the most authentic records in the world), it must greatly transcend it in some important particulars. So far as I have been able to compare the two, I am decidedly of the opinion that the bay of our commercial metropolis is incomparably before that of Naples in eels and drum-fish, and that this point

Library of Congress

of superiority vastly outweighs the mere circumstance that the latter is thirty miles wide, has Capri and Ischia, instead of Governor's and Gibbet Islands, Vesuvius in the place of Paulus Hook, and a range of mountains for the Jersey shore. I therefore bade adieu to the city with less regret when I recollected that her commercial enterprise and prosperity are so great, and her prospects so brilliant, as to induce the simple to presume that she is equally peerless in every thing else, and to have claimed for her a character which fate has decreed she can never possess. The truth is, like a village beauty, New-York is believed by her admirers to be the paragon of science, taste, and all things; because she excels the known world in what they think of greater value.

The passage of Hell Gate is very interesting under certain circumstances. When the sun is low, either at morning or evening, the sloping light has a pretty effect among the smooth green lawns, the weeping willows, the tasteful mansions, and the little white boat and bathing-houses on the western shore of the bay. As the sloop, under the cheering influence of a brisk breeze, stretches from side to side, in its labours to stem the current, these objects are presented to the eye under a great variety of aspects; and the turbulence of the water rushing over the rocks at the Gate, so like the agitated crowd of the city streets, redoubles in the traveller's mind the beauties of the tranquil scenes on shore. We look, therefore, on the retired retreat of the merchant 66 with some participation of the pleasure enjoyed by the family groups, now and then seen rambling at leisure along the rocks, or seated upon the grass near the margin of the tranquil bay, which often reflects the features of that attractive scene.

If night begins to close around us, or if a threatening thunder-shower assails us in this remarkable pass, we may have some faint idea of those scenes of dread and danger which have here been so often experienced by vessels under the equinox, or in a violent hurricane. What a reverse to the tranquil enjoyments of the summer residence must be presented by the signal of distress heard at night between claps of thunder, or to the

Library of Congress

gay party on the rocks by the coroner's jury sitting in the harbour, over the body of some shipwrecked stranger.

Kip's Bay reminded me so strongly of the retreat of General Washington from Long Island, that my imagination depicted several of the painful scenes which followed it, as we sailed along near the spot where they had occurred. The guardian care of Providence over our feeble army was plainly shown at several important epochs of our Revolutionary War, but in no case, I believe, more conspicuously than when the British were ready to destroy or to capture it on Long Island. The hasty redoubts and embankments, now fast disappearing there under the plough and the street inspector's rod, attest the zeal with which the patriotic militia of the neighbouring states laboured for the defence of the capital; but nothing can give a lively picture of the trying circumstances of the time but the few aged survivors of that period.

"I was a mere boy," said a venerable friend, "but hearing that the city was in danger, sat up late at night to cast bullets, and in the morning hurried off without leave, to join the army. I spent part of the first night of my active service standing sentinel on one of the advanced stations near Flatbush, during a tremendous thunder-storm, the lightning of which shone on the enemy's tents and arms, then in full view. Of course I had time to make my own reflections on war, and the desperate condition of the country." Without the aid of a thick mist, which covered the movements of our army, our retreat would have been discovered, and drawn on a general attack. The outposts had been ordered to be kept occupied till the last, and then to be given up. While some of the troops were yet waiting to embark, however, the commander of one of them, who had misunderstood the order, marched down to the shore. He was ordered instantly back; and, strange as it may seem, reoccupied his post without the observation of the enemy.

At the battle of White Plains some of our old soldiers were exasperated beyond measure by the conduct of General Lee. "I was at the battle of White Plains," said an old countryman, "and for want of a better, belonged to the *resarve* of colours. I suppose you

Library of Congress

know what that is. Well, in the battle, I heard a kind of a rumpus behind me; and says I, they're a going to cut off our retreat. I'm afraid they are, says our sargeant. And says he to me, will you fall upon them in our rear? Says I, yes; and in front too, says I: for I was young in them days. Well, just then I looked, and see his excellency, General Washington, coming with his life-guard. They were on a brisk trot; and some on 'em had to canter to keep up. He rode right up to Gen. Lee, and says he, general, why don't you fight? Says he, my men won't stand it. Says his excellency (I won't be sartin he said you lie; but he said), you han't tried 'em. And there we were all in a hurry to march on; but he had been bribed with British gold: there's no doubt on't. There wasn't a man there but what would have been glad to have his excellency say the word—and they would have riddled him finer than any sieve you ever see. Every one would have had a push at him: they would have riddled him finer than snuff.”

Croton River, near which this battle was fought, will be in great danger of being carried to New-York, whenever the corporation shall care one half as much about what their fellow-citizens drink, as they do about getting their votes.

The shores of the East River show little improvement in agriculture; an art in which our countrymen are far in the rear of some other nations. There is every reason to believe, 68 that judicious treatment would soon double the product of these fields. But what is to be expected in a land where learning has long been ranged in array against that most important science, where the colleges are ashamed to admit even its name on their lists of studies, where its instruments are despised by the student, and the aspirant at book-knowledge casts from him every mark of that most honourable profession, as something incompatible with his lofty aims? How can it be expected that our fields should be subjected to such systems as the wisest and most enlightened men might devise, while the most frivolous topic has the preference over agriculture in the company of those whose example is powerful in society; while our children are kept from a knowledge of the

Library of Congress

plainest of its principles, though drilled for months and years on the Greek particles, or see thousands squandered to make them French parrots and peacocks.

Here pardon me for a digression. In the Granditone Academy the pupils were trained to look upon the farmers' sons of that town and county as beings of an inferior nature, though the public prejudice against it, which was thus greatly fostered, was constantly counteracting the labours of the principal and teachers; and I believe that its "liberal friends" generally would have been more unwilling to have a boy skilled in the care of an orchard, or the rearing of fowls, than caught stealing eggs or apples. The manual labour schools deserve the thanks of the country for breaking through such miserable prejudices. But they need the active and immediate co-operation of good parents, who should make agricultural, or at least horticultural labour a regular daily employment, for the moral and intellectual, as well as the physical benefit of their children. What youth would not derive real gratification from seeing the shrub or the tree springing from the earth he had softened with that vigorous arm which is now more honourably employed in swinging a fashionable walking-stick? Whose health might not be improved or guarded by the most invigorating of all exercise in the open air? Whose intelligence would not be cultivated by the application of arithmetic to the calculations of labour, wages, and prices, the practical observation of plants, animals, and minerals in the great public cabinet and museum of nature? Whose habits might not be hedged in from evil, if the recreations of the day led to more lofty associations and meditations, tempted him into the fields at daybreak, gave him a keener relish for plain food than the fashionable cook can excite with all his sauce and spices, and make him long for repose at the hour which Providence has assigned to it?

It would be well for other places besides the shores of this strait, called the East River, if they were the residence of such men as my old friend Peter Practical, of Studywork, who, without the advantages of a fashionable friend to influence him, did, as a man of common sense will sometimes do in his circumstances, train up his sons to "ride horse," as it was called,—not with a lackey, but with a plough behind them; to rise, not with the headache at eight or nine, to hot rolls and coffee, but with daybreak, to go to pasture,

Library of Congress

and milk the milk they were to drink for breakfast. They were seen accompanying their father in the spring, planting corn in company, and listening to his remarks and questions, which were full of originality, cheerfulness, and good sense. One had the cattle under his particular care the whole year round; another was supervisor of the sheep; a third, who had shown a mechanical turn, was put in authority over the tools and implements; and little Tom, the fourth, was often heard asking questions of them all, assisting them and his father by turns, studying the habits of the fowls, the sheep, and the oxen, and looking further every day into the various interesting things around him. Every season brought new employments, pleasures, and instructions to them all; and the father often asked their opinions on such subjects as they could understand, and encouraged them by acting on their suggestions, about the planting of watermelons out of sight from the road, strengthening the fence where the cattle threatened to get in, or putting scarecrows in a better position. He kept them at the district-school as long as it was open, and made them the cleanest and most polite children there; and when the school ceased, he devoted 7 70 an hour at least in the day to the instruction of his boys, and those of his neighbourhood in his own house. Scarcely was this practice entirely infringed upon even in the midst of planting or of harvest. I never was in a house in which learning appeared to be more highly respected. He had a small library, containing solid works of his father's day and his own; and few people ever treated good books with more regard. Of useless or injurious ones, however, his children were taught to speak in terms of contempt or abhorrence; and as the rule of the house on this, as on many other subjects, was to weigh every thing in the balance of practical usefulness, it was easily and generally justly applied. When the Granditone Academy announced that chemistry and natural philosophy were to be taught there, he sent Richard to see whether he could get any thing out of the instructions in those branches which might be turned to account. It was soon apparent, however, that scarcely any thing of these branches was taught, so much time was occupied in the classes of French (though without any hazard of learning to speak it); of music, without learning to sing; of rhetoric, without getting any thing to say; and of composition, without obtaining an idea worth writing. Richard, therefore, came home, at the end of one quarter,

Library of Congress

with little more to communicate than a list of definitions of learned terms, which his father told him were worth about as much as the names of a set of farming instruments to a person ignorant of their forms and uses. Having however been obliged to purchase some elementary works on these invaluable sciences, he brought them home, and from these much important information was derived, and the names of books still more valuable to the farmer, who was soon able to make solid additions to his library, and to put in practice the principles they inculcated.

If the proprietor of any of these tracts of land along the East River could see the farm of Peter Practical, or even the account of its annual products in cattle, vegetables, fruit, &c., with the simple but judicious and truly scientific means by which extraordinary results are there produced, he would wish that some of his family might take up his residence in the neighbourhood. To this, however, there might be an objection: for it is stated, on good authority, that in one place on Long Island, where an intelligent observer would exclaim, "Why is this not the garden of the metropolis?" there has been a secret association among the people, to effect the exclusion of every person from that part of the country in which Mr. Practical lives. But how can this be effected? inquires one of my republican readers. In this way: if a piece of ground is to be sold at auction, one or more of the society attends, and if it is likely to be purchased by any one suspected of such an origin, he at once outbids him, and the loss is divided among the members of the association, who appear to believe that what remains to them of their worldly estates has thus been saved from destruction.

The northern shore of Long Island, unfortunately for the coasting trade, with few exceptions, is of a uniform appearance, and has few harbours where even a sloop may find refuge from a northerly storm. A steep sand-bank bounds the Sound on the south, almost in its whole extent, and long intervals are generally found between the few bays and inlets that break its uniformity. It is surprising that the cases of wreck and loss of life have not been more frequent; for the number, variety, and value of the cargoes which annually pass through this great channel of domestic commerce are surprisingly great,

Library of Congress

and fast increasing. The light-houses, which, now shine like diamond pins on almost every important headland, do what human precaution can to prevent disasters: but what aid can they afford in misty or snowy weather?

I was reminded of the anxious night once spent by a friend in a steamboat at the mouth of yonder harbour, with a strong gale blowing in, and the vessel, with her head towards it, revolving her ponderous wheels with all her might, and yet barely able to hold the station which no anchor would have enabled her to maintain.

Not far under our lee was the spot where an enterprising farmer's son, from a retired country town, in a sloop, loaded with wood for New-York, was driven on shore at a high 72 spring-tide in the night, and remained ignorant of his situation till morning broke, and showed them they were safe. The waves which had broken over them had thrown the vessel up to the verge of a cultivated field, so that with little difficulty they leaped upon the stone wall which surrounded it; and after recovering from almost freezing by sheltering themselves awhile behind it, they found comfortable refreshments in a neighbouring farmhouse.

With scarcely less suffering, though with better fortune, another friend of mine, of three times his age, and ten times his skill, had conducted his little vessel through these waters in a December night, when a heavy fall of rain and snow, accompanied with freezing weather, had rendered it impossible to loosen a rope or lower a sail, and a tremendous gale hoarsely commanded the furling of the canvass on penalty of vengeance. Every brace and halliard had become a spar of ice, and the sails could not be cut out of the yards and buntlines, because the crew had refused to do duty, and gone below. The old commander, undaunted by all these difficulties, might have been seen (had there been anybody to observe him), firmly holding the helm, sometimes looking in vain through the darkness for any sign of the coast, at other times straining his eyes to distinguish what light-house it might be he saw or thought he saw over the icy taffrail. The terrors of that

Library of Congress

night,—though the tale I had listened to in the Mediterranean,—were strongly impressed upon my mind.

73

CHAPTER X.

New-Haven—Literary aspect—Refined Society—Taste in Architecture—Burying Ground—Franklin Institute—Paintings of Trumbull—American Taste—Learning.

New-Haven, so celebrated for the attractive beauty of its streets, the variety and romantic nature of the neighbouring scenery, and still more the literary and refined character of its society—New-Haven it was my lot to visit at a most interesting period, namely, during the ceremonies of Commencement Week. The annual celebration of Yale College had been changed this year, but did not fail to collect a large concourse of persons from different parts of the country, with, as frequently happens, some foreigners of literary taste and intelligence.

There is scarcely any thing better calculated to give pleasure to a friend of learning than to visit this delightful city on such an occasion. It seems as if New-Haven had been originally planned for the site of a university; and almost as if every public as well as every private house had been erected, every garden laid out, every court-yard and public square beautified, and every tree planted and trained, with direct reference to its appearance and convenience as a seat of learning. The central square, which is a noble quadrangle of eight or nine hundred feet, surrounded by double rows of large elms, and divided by a street that is completely arched over with thick foliage, although it is the site of four of the finest public buildings, and shows the fronts of handsome mansions on three of its sides, affords the university its place of honour, for the six college buildings are ranged in a long line on the western side, where the ground is highest, and the elevation superior to the chief part of the city. New-Haven is a place of considerable business, with the inhabitants of surrounding towns; but the stores are so remote from this delightful centre, or 7* 74 at

Library of Congress

least so effectually concealed from view, where this fine display of buildings is visible, that the idea as well as the interruption of business is entirely excluded. It is impossible for a stranger to catch a glimpse of the Green, as it is familiarly called, especially from some of the most favourable points of view (as, for example, the public or the private doors of the Tontine Coffee House), without experiencing sensations of a peculiar and most agreeable nature. He looks from under the shade of a venerable elm grove upon a smooth level of green grass, about four hundred feet wide, and eight hundred in length, from right to left. The eye then first meets an obstacle, and falls upon a long line of drooping trees of the same description, standing like a wall of verdure before him, disclosing only the general proportions of three fine churches, in different tastes, but at uniform distances, with towers rising to a great height into the air, and giving an interrupted view of the university. As for tranquillity, it is unbroken, unless, perhaps, by the traffickers in water-melons offering their cooling wares to abate the thirst of a literary race; or by the voices of the young treading the paths of science, which stretch across the smooth turf up the hill to the colleges, “as plain as road to parish church,” and far more easy than the steep of science, as it was represented to them at first starting, in the frontispiece of Dr. Webster's Spelling Book.

The periodical ringing of the bells, with the signs of gathering and dispersing classes, the stillness which reigns through this part of the city during the college exercises, and the student-like aspects of those who, at other hours, traverse the Green, have a tendency to direct the thoughts of the spectator to subjects above the common affairs of life, and by elevating the mind and tranquillizing the feelings, win from the stranger who visits the place a tribute of praise, the source of which may perhaps be more creditable to himself than he imagines. Many travellers have loved to recur to the beauties of New-Haven, and to praise its neat mansions, extensive and blooming gardens, level lawns and luxuriant foliage, who knew not that the chief source of their enjoyment, during their stay, 75 had been derived from another and a higher cause. I have often listened with pleasure to the encomiums thus annually poured, like a spontaneous song, from the hearts of many refined strangers on the spot, because, while it recalls to my own mind agreeable

Library of Congress

impressions, it informs me that my companions hold learning in becoming regard, and rejoice to see it duly honoured.

But in praising the fine part of New-Haven, I would not slight the remainder of the city. Many neat and not a few elegant houses are seen in other streets, especially in this vicinity, shaded by the rows of elms which extend far in every direction along those which here cross at right angles. Withdrawing northwardly along two of these, to the distance of about a quarter of a mile, you enter the beautiful "Avenue," where are collected the houses of several of the oldest and most eminent of the professors of Yale College, with the chaste and elegant mansion of the Poet Hillhouse at the opposite extremity, rising among the trees of a self-planted wood, on a gentle eminence. Nothing could be more pleasing or appropriate than the aspect of this retired spot, when I proceeded in the twilight to visit one of the professors; and nothing more accordant with the scene and the vicinity than the intelligent conversation, mingled with the refined hospitality and friendship shown by such of the neighbours as had assembled, to several literary strangers who presented themselves during the evening.

One cannot but regret, after seeing such a society, that its influence should not be more extensively exerted to raise the standard of conversation and manners in other places. No one can doubt that there is a large depository of power here which might, by some means, be made to operate upon our country extensively. Much might be done by a periodical publication, devoted not so much to the cultivation of the higher branches of science and literature, with which so few have any concern, but to the refinement of social intercourse, the incitement of parents to give a proper domestic education to their children, the inculcation of sound principles on this and many other subjects essential to private and public prosperity and happiness. The cause of 76 its want is probably to be attributed to the fact, that the members of this society underrate their own powers and opportunities for doing good in such a manner. Those connected with the university are generally much occupied with business; and there is so much refinement around them, that they do not, perhaps, feel how much it is needed elsewhere. Besides, they would

Library of Congress

be ready to say that Yale College, with the ten large and respectable boarding-schools in the city, are constantly labouring to produce such an effect. But how slight yet how effectual a labour it would be to publish a monthly magazine here, whose influence should be beneficially felt throughout the Union, and which, while it might chastise the follies and frailties of certain influential periodicals now existing, might condescend to instruct a million of our countrymen in the way to social refinement, the bosom friend of moral and religious improvement.

A society has been formed in New-Haven within a few months, for the promotion of taste in civic architecture, the laying out of grounds, &c. A stranger would at first be disposed to wonder less that such a subject should have attracted attention here, than that there should have been supposed to be room for improvement. And yet it was, in fact, perfectly natural that such a plan should have been devised in New-Haven; because improvements are much more likely to progress than to begin. And how important are the objects embraced by this society! Our best plans of architecture in the United States are notoriously defective. We have lived till this time without ascertaining any principles to be observed in building our houses, so as to consult the great points that ought to be regarded. How often do we begin to build without a thought even of old Fuller's quaint remark, that light and water, creation's eldest daughters, should first be sought in choosing a position; and after this, how innumerable are the violations of common sense, taste, and experience committed by every person who constructs a residence for his family! In fantastical ornaments and preposterous novelties, as well as in fashions condemned by every thing but habit, we often see that obedience to example 77 which ought to be yielded only to pure taste and sound judgment. The purse-proud descendant of a venerable family, to obliterate every trace of an education which he chooses to despise, and with the feelings almost of a parricide, levels the noble elms that defended worthier generations from the storms; before he lays the foundation of some glaring structure, which he thinks will captivate every eye. Some of our countrymen believe that there is no architectural taste independent of red, green, or blue paint; while others, especially in the

Library of Congress

capitals, sleep content (half a day's journey in the air,) if they succeed in building more spacious parlours than their neighbours, and in removing one more convenience to make room for a few more guests at an occasional winter's jam.

Happy would it be, if the society above referred to could teach us how to consult our own comfort, and the benefit of our children, in the plan of a house; if it could convince some parents that our dwellings should sometimes be the scenes of unostentatious, sincere, and Christian hospitality; but chiefly planned and furnished with a serious regard to its great object,—the training of their children. There can be no fireside in a house where every thing, has been sacrificed, in the plan and the furniture, to the hollow and ruinous ceremonies of fashionable life. The fireside is of but little importance, I know, in the view of persons who profess to live only for the present time; but this is a subject which might occupy the attention at least of some reflecting persons, if it were properly brought up to their notice. How impossible it is to reconcile the demands of fashion and of duty on the family of one of our wealthy citizens! How much more wise it would be to contract the walls and depress the ceilings of our houses to a reasonable size, and tear off from the furniture of our children's apartments some portion of the silks and gildings with which we early implant false ideas of the world and their own importance, and bring back every thing at once to the intellectual and moral scale on which some of our ancestors ordered their household! 1 What ages, what centuries of time would be rescued from the cares of spacious and gaudy apartments, the conversations 78 of heartless and formal visitors; what a round of new and nobler topics and daily pleasures might be substituted; what a revolution might be effected in the occupations and feelings of families; how many a child might be saved a banishment, who is now annually expelled from the parental roof, to seek afar a guardian and instructor, denied by fashion at home; how many a fireside might be daily and nightly gladdened with circles of well-taught and affectionate brothers and sisters, instead of being devoted to frivolous morning calls, and trampled by nightly dancers!

Library of Congress

Incontestibly many comforts and advantages of different kinds might accrue from the improvement of architectural taste and science, in our country at large. A sightly mansion may be erected at less expense than is often bestowed on a pile of deformity; and not only convenience but health may be secured by a judicious plan in building. The planting of trees on private grounds often contributes to the gratification of neighbours and the beauty of a town; and the laying out and decorating of public squares, although so generally neglected among us, might easily be rendered subservient to the improvement of public taste, intelligence, and morality. Whoever has been in Switzerland or other foreign countries, where rural seats are provided at the wayside, near fountains, on hill tops, or under the most venerable shades, for the convenience of foot-travellers, must recall with pleasure the agreeable impressions they give of the refinement of the inhabitants. What a total absence of all such feelings, on the contrary, is caused, as we pass along our own roads, to see no trace of any thing done for the benefit of a stranger! The road side is often studiously deprived of foliage; and it is rare that so much as a rock can be found proper to afford a convenient seat. On entering our villages also, is there any little grove, or even a single tree provided with benches, from which one may survey the objects around him? A trough may have been placed for the benefit of the cattle, to receive the water of a rill; but why is man considered as so far beneath all notice? The inn and the drinking shop indeed are open; but would not their evil influence be diminished, if every village were provided with a little shady green, furnished at least with a few seats in the shade, where the youth and age of the place might meet at sunset in the summer? With how little expense might the spot be beautified, and, if necessary, protected by a keeper! Winding paths are easily made; trees are easily planted, and will grow if let alone; flowers afford a cheap and delightful ornament; and how easily might tasteful arbours or rotundas be supplied with a vase, a bust, or even a statue, such as native artists can easily produce!

But this fertile subject has led me far beyond my intended limits. Let us turn to the decorated ground which shows, alas! a profusion of marble monuments, a little westward of the beautiful Avenue of which I have spoken. In my view, the burying-ground of New-

Library of Congress

Haven has been too much praised, as it can lay no claims to an equality, as a mere object of taste, with that great and beautiful depository of the dead of Paris with which it has most frequently been compared. The cemetery of Père la Chaise occupies a great extent of irregular ground, instead of being a mere plain of limited size; and in place of small monuments, mingled with many upright slabs, planted in lines parallel with the straight poplars, which imperfectly shade them, presents a long succession of more costly and towering obelisks, pyramids, and fabrics of different styles, half surrounded by clusters of various trees and shrubs, occupying points favourable to effect. The paths wind over and around many a little eminence, sometimes confining the view of the solitary visiter to objects close beside him, compelling him to think of some individual among the multitudes of dead, and perhaps to read his epitaph; sometimes affording a distant view of the metropolis, and filling the mind with a solemn and instructive lesson concerning the living. This is a brief picture of Père la Chaise, as the cemetery is familiarly denominated: that is, of the better portion of it; and how can a comparison be instituted between its rural scenery and luxurious monuments and any thing we find here? Perhaps all the marble in the whole burying-ground of New-Haven would hardly be sufficient to construct some 80 single monuments erected to Parisians. But, for all the purposes for which a place of interment should be planned and visited, that of New-Haven appeared to me as far superior to that of Paris as I can possibly describe. One of the most splendid structures in the latter is that of Abélard and Héloïse! What man of intellect, not to say of religion, or even of morality, does not feel insulted by such a fact? I will not speak of that large portion of the ground which is dug over once in a few years.

The soul which “startles at eternity,” goes to the graveyard to learn something of the import of so dread a word. Trifles, such as wealth, taste, learning (so called), honour that cometh not from God, glory that survives not death, man knows too well to be willing seriously to investigate their nature. If he endures them at all, he seeks ever to mingle with the crowd which proclaims them as worth more than they are. Worldly men, therefore, you find not going to the grave, to weep, or even to meditate there. The place then must have a solemn

Library of Congress

sermon prepared to preach to every visiter, on the end of all things,—of all things but one. It must have thoughts ready to suggest on the imperishable nature of the soul, the superior importance of every thing that may lead it to future happiness, and the danger of forgetting its inestimable worth among the glare of the baubles around us. Whatever there be, therefore, in a cemetery, which does not tend to depreciate this world in our esteem, and to exalt the future, is out of place; and whatever the object be, it proclaims that the author of it was entirely ignorant of the task he had undertaken, and had no mind capable of comprehending the subject.

While, therefore, I state a plain truth, that there are finer serpentine walks, more costly and splendid monuments in Père la Chaise, I insist that more judgment, far higher taste has been shown in the New-Haven burying-ground. In my view also the same might be said of every village burying-ground in our country, were it not for the too limited size generally allowed them, and the too common neglect with which they are treated. I speak from a deep sentiment of my heart when I say, that a secure enclosure, 81 a few gravelled walks, shaded by willows, enriched with flowering shrubs, and decently secluded from noise and dust, would furnish every village with a depository for the dead more appropriate, more truly beautiful, and for the living more instructive, than the boasted cemetery of the French metropolis.

It is difficult for me to express all the gratification the traveller experiences on entering the Franklin Institute, which is connected with one of the principal inns in New-Haven. Whoever heard, in any other city or country, of such a union? In a spacious wing of the hotel, over the dining-room, the lodger may cross a passage and enter a fine lecture-room, furnished with seats for two or three hundred people, with a desk for a lecturer, having a neat laboratory and apparatus in view, a niche for receivers, with a flue to take off offensive gases, a study adjoining; and a private passage to a fine mineralogical cabinet, occupying the third story, to which you are next introduced. This institution is due entirely to the intelligence and liberality of Mr. Abel Brewster, a wealthy mechanic of this city, who planned and founded it at his own expense, for the benefit of the citizens. A course of

Library of Congress

scientific lectures is delivered every winter, principally by the professors of Yale College, to which tickets are obtained for two dollars. The professors and other literary gentlemen of the place afford it their countenance and labours; and the influence upon the inhabitants has been very beneficial, especially those who have not many other sources of instruction. Such an example, from an intelligent and highly philanthropic individual, should provoke to imitation some of those in other places who possess the power of promoting the great interests of the public in a similar manner.

New-Haven has been greatly enriched within a few months by the acquisition of some of the invaluable paintings of Colonel John Trumbull, which are now deposited in a building erected by subscription in the rear of the College Lyceum. This edifice is itself Worthy of particular attention, on account of its neat and correct architecture, and its appropriate plan for the objects designed. It is notorious 8 82 that in all the picture galleries of Europe there is not one in which the proper arrangements have been made for the favourable disposition of paintings and admission of light. Numerous windows, generally large, and opening nearly from the ceiling to the floor, give a multitude of cross lights; or else a portion of the apartment is thrown into deep obscurity. You may walk through the whole gallery of the Louvre, about one-third of a mile in length, and not see a painting in the best light; while in Italy the pictures in private collections are often hung upon hinges, and those of the Vatican, among others, suffer from the evils above mentioned. Some of the exhibition-rooms in Philadelphia, New-York, and perhaps some of our other cities, are now more judiciously lighted from above. The rotunda of the capitol is a noble specimen of the same kind, reminding one of the Pantheon of Rome; and although constructed primarily for a different purpose, affords one of the finest galleries for paintings in the world. After visiting the well-known mineralogical cabinet of Yale College, I entered the gallery where, under the advantage of a light admitted from above, are seen the pictures of Colonel Trumbull; and it is doubly gratifying to find so many of them deposited in a permanent situation, in his native state, which he has done so much to honour, and to know that this arrangement has been made by the liberality of some of his fellow-citizens.

Library of Congress

Of the full value of the national paintings of this artist, it will be impossible to judge until time shall have enabled the public more justly to appreciate it. But how happy it is that an officer of Washington's family should have been able as well as disposed to record the principal events of our revolution in this most interesting and instructive manner, and to preserve the portraits of the most distinguished actors. While on the spot, I could not but wish that a suggestion I heard made some months since might ere long be carried into effect, viz. that lectures should be delivered, to the students and others, on these pictures, embracing those instructive historical and biographical details in which our revolutionary period so greatly abounded, and in which our youth ought to be frequently and familiarly schooled.

83

I was exceedingly mortified, however, to find in the State House, a copy of Trumbull's Declaration of Independence, furtively made by a raw young artist, which has been purchased by the Legislature, and hung up in the hall. This appeared to me as discreditable a reflection upon the want of taste and the abundance of parsimony as that body could have cast upon itself.

The State House is a beautiful edifice, built on the model of a fine Grecian temple, in pure taste, and is handsomely stuccoed in imitation of granite. These perishable materials appear ill when betrayed under the thin disguise of mock stone. The Gothic Church near by already shows the white pine under the glazing of brown paint and sand. Apropos, speaking of the Gothic style,—Why should it be introduced into, America? There is not a feature in society here which bears the slightest affinity with it; and so utterly opposed is it to the principles of pure and refined taste, that nothing makes it at all tolerable in Europe, except its known connexion with the days of semi-barbarism in which it flourished.

But it is more agreeable to approve than to condemn. Let us take this, favourable opportunity to reflect a moment on a national taste in the fine arts, appropriate to our country. In architecture it is much easier to say what does not than what does suit our

Library of Congress

circumstances. I will leave that to others for the present, hoping they may apply to it those principles of common sense which I wish to suggest in respect to a sister art. In painting, we ought to fix our principles distinctly. We ought not in this or any thing else, servilely to follow the example of any, even the masters of the art. We are to imitate the style of the best ancient orators, poets, and historians, when we speak and write; but how? By using exactly their words? No; but by saying what they would have said if they had been like us, and in our places. So, when we come to painting or to sculpture, we should not merely copy Jupiters, or Apollos, or Laocoons. Apelles and Praxiteles would not have produced such personages if they had flourished in our days in the Western Continent. Long were the arts smothered in Europe under the weight of ancient example; and when West roused up from the revery enough to throw off the drapery of antiquity, they breathed more freely. But West went not into the proper American domain. He was indeed unfavourably situated to do so, for he was in Europe. We find him therefore, when out of scripture and poetical subjects, commemorating the death of Wolfe at Quebec, and making his hero with his last breath applaud a victory in which no principle was involved, and from which flowed no result of interest to mankind. The tale to be told on his canvass was the old bald tale of military adventure: directed by a ministry three thousand miles distant, with money which they seem to have expended chiefly for their own credit. Military glory is the highest motive you can attribute to any of the personages of whom the groups must be formed; and the whole work is but the old song of false praise to war and bloody-victory.

But how different from all this are the paintings of Trumbull! How much more appropriate to the principles we profess! Each of the personages presents an instructive lesson in his history. Here is no son, whose name was inscribed on the army list merely to secure him a profession. The simple insignia of these soldiers were not purchased with money, and no accident or fatality brought them together. The war in which they engaged had not been waged for the exaltation of an ambitious general, or to slake the thirst of any tyrant for blood; and the actors were not the blind servants of one whose commands might not be questioned. Each man had independently acted in obedience to his own judgment,

Library of Congress

and in accordance with his own feelings. His education had been such as to strengthen his mind, and to cultivate pure motives; and the great proof of the patriotism of our army was shown by their quietly disbanding and returning to their homes when the war had been terminated. Other troops, after obtaining victory, would have considered their own great object yet unaccomplished, while their pay was withheld; and would have been ready to ravage their country to reward or revenge themselves. But the men whom our 85 great artist has preserved on his canvass, maintained the attachment of children to their country, and voluntarily resigned that power by which alone they might have compelled the satisfaction of their claims, although they were just and undisputed. Posterity will have the discrimination which we want, and appreciate such works according to their merits.

It has been lamented that some of our states, and especially such as have contained the best of our colleges, should be so parsimonious in rendering them pecuniary aid. No doubt a few thousands of dollars, if conferred upon Yale College some years ago, would have proved of extreme value to the interests of learning in Connecticut and the country. She has had to struggle with poverty, or her usefulness, great as it has been, might have been doubled. The legislature of the state has appeared unaccountably indifferent to learning, while in possession of means for its cultivation, I suppose, superior to those of any other in the Union. This I attribute to the habit of receiving early instruction in the district schools at the expense of a permanent fund; to the division which is made between those fully and those partially educated; and, perhaps, above all, to the inadequacy of common education.

The right of every parent to send his child to a district school is considered as entire as the claim to air and water; and indeed many resist taking more instruction than they please, as they would object to excessive eating or breathing. The people are not called upon to provide for the support of their schools, nor obliged at any time to go without them; and therefore do not often contemplate, if they ever do, the real value of regular education. Besides, the most important part of the instruction is often communicated at home, and this may be another reason why there is no general disposition among the people to be liberal to literary institutions. Practical knowledge is too generally underrated by men of

Library of Congress

regular education, and this fosters jealousy against them, and provokes contempt for theoretical learning. Study and work are so entirely separated, in short, as to be kept ignorant of each other; and there has been 8* 86 popular ignorance and jealousy enough to let this chief literary institution of the state languish for many years. Yale College has recently received above one hundred thousand dollars in subscriptions from its alumni and friends in different parts of the country, although about an equal sum has been contributed at the same time for several other institutions in New-England. While these instances of enlightened liberality authorize us to indulge hopes that learning will be supported in the Union by the public; the past warns us of the danger which it incurs among a people educated on a defective plan, and claims the immediate improvement of common schools: even those of Connecticut, which have been greatly overrated.

Saybrook, on the western side of Connecticut River, at its mouth, was the first place occupied by the English in New-England, after leaving the coast of Massachusetts Bay. After repeated solicitations from the Indians, who originally occupied the banks of this delightful stream, and had been driven from the western shore by the Mohawks, the governor of Plymouth Colony sent Lieutenant Gardner with a few soldiers to occupy this post, for fear lest the Dutch should anticipate him. He arrived only a few hours before a Dutch vessel appeared from New-York, which sailed up and founded a settlement at Hartford, under the patronage of the Mohawks.

The steamboats stop at Saybrook Point, which is about a mile from the village. Here are a few houses, several of which receive boarders during the summer season. I may give the results of a morning's observations, during a walk I took between sunrise and breakfast time. Saybrook Point is nearly in the form of a circle, being a peninsula, connected with the mainland by a very narrow neck, over which the tide sometimes flows, and having a broad and handsome bay of shallow water on each side. The soil is sandy and poor, and the elevation of the highest part, which is near the middle, is not above twenty feet. The remains of the fort are on a small spot of ground at the extremity of the peninsula; but the site of the first fort is believed to have been worn away by the encroachments of

Library of Congress

the waves. 87 I found an old man hoeing corn on the bank which slopes eastward a little in its rear. "I suspect," said he, "that this is the oldest field between Plymouth Colony and the Western Ocean; for from its situation this would naturally have been the first spot the settlers would have tilled, as the Indians kept them at first closely confined." This appeared to me very probable; and when I reflected what rich and abundant harvests are now growing almost to the Rocky Mountains, it gave me a striking idea of the progress of the country in two hundred years. On the brow of the bleak bank stands an ancient monument, of coarse free-stone, erected to Lady Arabella Fenwick, which has now no inscription, and is entirely neglected, being barely kept standing to comply with the requisitions of the deed by which a large tract of land on the opposite shore is held. The simplicity and loneliness of this relick are very touching to the feelings, when the pure and exalted character of the deceased is called to mind.

The land on the Point is laid out in large fields and squares, as it was originally intended for a commercial city; and Oliver Cromwell, with other men then more distinguished than himself, was once, it is said, actually embarked in the Thames to occupy the ground. The foundation of the building which was once Yale College, the cellar of the Court House, and the ancient grave-stones in the burying-yard, offer interesting objects to the antiquary. Two or three old houses are among the few specimens of early New-England architecture, now observed by the traveller in this state. Captain Doty's house and his portrait, as well as his grave and those of his contemporaries and children, I visited.

I had some conversation with an old matron, whose unaffected dignity, obliging manners, intelligent remarks, and refined language reminded me of many of those I had viewed with such respect and attachment in my childhood. She approved of my early rising and rational curiosity, and believed it would be better if we were more acquainted with the character of our ancestors and those difficult times which were formerly experienced here. There had been a mushroom 88 race, which had risen after the Revolutionary War, very unlike their fathers, caring nothing for them, and wanting only to amass money; but she believed times were better now, and it had become quite the fashion to search for

Library of Congress

antiquities. It seemed to her like the Book of the Law, which was lost a long time, but was found in the temple in the time of Josiah.

CHAPTER XI.

A Connecticut Clergyman's Family—Wood-hauling—Middletown.

In my journey up the river I deviated from my course to visit one of the favourite scenes of my childhood. It was one of the river towns, so like the others in its general traits, that to describe it is in some sense to describe all which retain their ancient agricultural character. I spent parts of two years there while a boy, in the family of the old clergyman of the place; and thus became instructed in the state of society, as an apprentice learns his master's trade, viz. by assisting to carry it on. The good old man, who had lived many years on a glebe of four acres and four hundred dollars a year, was considered by his neighbours entitled by his character to the liberal pay of one dollar a week for boarding, lodging, and instructing a boy like me; and in the plain hospitality which I received at their firesides, I read at once their love for him, and their respect for the learning which I was supposed to be seeking. Some of these men, while they worked the farms of their ancestors, occupied dwellings which had sheltered several generations; or at least reposed under aged elms where their grandfathers had pursued their boyish sports. I soon began to share the feelings of the family, where every wandering stranger was sure of finding friends; and through the frequent calls of connexions and brother-clergymen, as well as by visits in 89 the neighbourhood and the parish, I became acquainted with men, congregations, and things far and near.

If it be useful to a mind to contemplate the operations of an important and valuable machine, must it not be an improving task to observe the operations of such a society? I cannot tell exactly how much I was the better for the knowledge I acquired there of the piety of Æneas, or the purity of the heathen gods; but I am sure that the excellent and exalted characters I there saw displayed, with the daily exhibition of doing good, have had

Library of Congress

a perceptible influence on my life, and ought to have had much more. The old gentleman, besides his pastoral duties, was chief counsellor to old and young in cases of doubt and difficulty, patron-general of learning, and one with whom those minds which wandered farthest beyond the village sphere were fond of comparing themselves. By his kitchen fire, where so many of the families of New-England draw their circles in the winter evenings, I have heard principles avowed, and opinions familiarly expressed, concerning which I have since seen the nations of Europe at war. The very bare-footed boy who spent a week in the house, while his poor wayworn mother was accommodated in the 'linter room' for the love of him whose heart-broken disciple she was, poor little George went off engrafted with views of the rights and duties of man, which certain European sovereigns have refused to learn from exile or the sword. He encouraged me at my evening lesson by reminding me that there was no impediment between any boy and the highest station of usefulness in the country; and when we closed with an hour spent in shelling corn, he would sometimes talk of one of my grandfathers who had loved his books in his youth, or tell tales of his missionary adventures among the Delaware Indians.

The means of obtaining an education for the desk in past days were confined, as is well known, to the private instructions of clergymen, and none of those seminaries had yet an existence which have since done so much for the church, and are doing much more. Our New-England clergymen carefully transmitted their learning from generation 90 to generation, under the disadvantages to which they were subjected, by their private instructions to young men preparing for their profession; and although their time was much engrossed with parochial labours, the students were not as much as now withdrawn from the world, but more trained to the practice of a science in which theoretical learning alone is of little direct avail in society. For my own part, I felt that the Christian religion was of real value, when I, though a child, accompanied the venerable pastor in some of his visits to the people of his charge. Two of these occasions have often since presented themselves to my memory in a powerful contrast. One of these was the funeral of a young man, who had suddenly died on the eve of marriage. The mother stood among the mournful throng,

Library of Congress

with a heavenly calmness upon her face, and seemed to drink in the consolations of the Scriptures offered by my aged companion, like one thirsty for the water of life. In the other case, I found a half-heathen family at their miserable meal, on the outskirts of the parish, with poverty and ignorance written on every countenance, no Bible in the house, and apparently unacquainted with the bearing of its doctrines on that spirit which had recently inhabited the lifeless body now ready for the grave in one corner of the room. Never before nor since have I witnessed equal degradation in a family in that part of our country; and the old pastor seemed as much astonished as myself, for they had kept aloof from all the blessings of civilization around them, and been as much unknown as unknowing. From what I heard of the conversation which took place, I received the impression that they had come some months before from another state, where few then enjoyed the benefits of intellectual or religious instruction; and although I spoke not a word on the subject, and probably my reflections were not conjectured even by my companion, with all his fondness for youth, and his penetration, I believe I left the house a decided, though a young champion for knowledge and refinement.

Wood-hauling is a word which requires explanation to such as have not been intimately acquainted with the country 91 villages in New-England. It is the name of an annual holyday, when the parishioners make their contributions of wood to their pastor, and partake of refreshment or a regular dinner at his house.

In the visits I paid with my venerable instructor to many a habitation far and near, to give invitations for this muster of the parish, I had glimpses of life among the farmers, and even the lawyers' and physicians' households, and thought I grew rich in friends faster than ever before. M. Levasseur, while in General Lafayette's train, had not more reason to be pleased with the Americans, than I had to love the people of the parish during this tour of visitation. All the overflowings of their affection towards the good old man they bestowed upon me; and many a respectful courtesy I saw made by dignified frames which I had seen before only moving to the house of God, and which I had supposed to be thus perpendicular the year round. The farmers' wives patted my head, and stooping down,

Library of Congress

smiled in my face. The girls brought me nut-cakes, and the boys chestnuts and apples; while the old dog or cat was driven out of the warm chimney-corner, and I was placed on a block to warm my little toes and fingers. I had not supposed there were as many dried pumpkins and sausages in the world as I saw hanging from the kitchen-walls; and as for cows and beehives, milk and honey, I thought of the land of Canaan. To hear such cheerful, laborious, intelligent people talk about the joys of religion and the prospects of heaven, made me love to sit on their settle-benches and walk on their sanded floors. Families in affliction, and those in poverty were visited, encouraged, or prayed with, and left without a hint at any inappropriate subject; but where good manners and good memory were not found together, an invitation was elsewhere given by the pastor to the wood-hauling next Thursday, and every face brightened at the word.

Thursday came at the parsonage, and I helped to twist tow strings to roast the beef and spareribs, while all the tables were set in rows; loaves of bread were cut so as to appear yet whole; the great gate, like those fickle people 92 whose similitude it is, after having been for a time close shut, was swung wide open; and the farmers and farmers' boys hurried off to the woods with their horse sleds. By-and-by they began to come in, rivalling each other in the size of their loads, the straightness and quality of their wood, their expedition in cutting it, their dexterity in driving up and unloading it. Sleighs came in with bags of wheat and rye or Indian meal, which the miller had to grind and toll for us through the winter; and butter, eggs, cheese, bacon, heads of fine flax and hanks of yarn were handed in and deposited in cellars and cupboards, with admiration at the generosity of friends far and near. Twenty men, old and respectable enough for deacons, were soon assembled; while there were others in the prime of life, enough to have made one of Colonel Warner's companies at the battle of Bennington. Ah! how many of those iron-bound frames have ere this been shattered by death, as the finest trees of the forest were that day levelled and riven by their hands!

Long Tom Hewitt came headlong down Hewitt's Hill, with his horses' tails sweeping the snow, and pulling the handsomest load of white ash that was hauled that winter. There he

Library of Congress

had lived, driving such horses, and burning such wood, like his fathers before him, with little notice from the world: one of the shoots from a stump of an old family which dated far back towards the first settlement of the township. He looked as wild as any of the Indians his ancestors were reported to have out-ambushed and outrun; but there was nothing else savage or active about him. The uplands produced more grass than the cattle or sheep could eat, and they multiplied and fattened even faster than the Hewitts who fed and slaughtered them; and this was the simple secret of their being all men "to do in the world." He had more respectability than his apathy deserved, and more influence than he ever exercised. His children were born to ignorance and plenty of bread and milk. They went to pasture in the summer, and ate hasty-pudding and great sweet apples all winter. They never ran away and never died. Their feet were too heavy for the former, and the 93 air was too pure for the latter. Because Hewitt's ridge was the highest ground in that region, they seemed to think there was nothing above them worth grasping after. They bore the reproach of ignorance from generation to generation, because, as the expression was, their family was of poor blood enough: want of education being hereditary among them, which is next to downright vice in public estimation. I am not using language here in its European sense; for reading, writing, and ciphering are not here called education. The Hewitts went to the district school every winter, and the teachers were boarded and respectfully treated in their regular turns at their houses; but none of them got that acquaintance with the world, or what it contains, which so often enlivened their neighbours' conversation, had not a map or a library to show, nor any eminent namesake, to boast of, and, to crown all, were not ashamed of their degradation. When therefore Tom had unloaded his wood, his next and only thought was that it must be near dinner-time.

Charley Crawley was announced as being on his way up the plain. Some pretended to recognise him by his sorrowful long under-jaw; but they in fact distinguished the unpainted dash-board of his pung, which had been broken the week before by his wild son Josh in a high gale, and afterward mended by him in a low one. The old horse, which was as calm as a wooden clock, with the old man to balance his notions, had been a wild fury on the

Library of Congress

night of the sleigh-ride, when she set off in the moonlight like a watch with a broken hair-spring, at a rate never designed for him, and soon ran out his career. What Charley had in his pung he was slow in exhibiting, so that the spectators had begun to tire at their posts, when old Captain John, a retired sailor, came up, heralded by his own stentorian voice. His knotty whip made many short fashionable calls on his blind horse, which was proof against such attacks, as much as the sculls of the Hewitts against the wit of the master.

The out-door ceremonies were almost completed, when two lines had been formed by the loads of fine wood thrown dexterously off the sleds to the right and left, almost the 94 whole length of the yard. The place of honour, that is the vacant spot at the end of this avenue, alone remained to be occupied, having been, with one consent, left for Bill Peters, the most athletic man in the town. He soon came from the farthest wood-lot, and with the largest load, and with a rapidity and skill which excited general admiration, emptied his sled in the very spot designed, without any apparent exertion; and in a moment more, had disposed of his team, stamped the snow from his boots, and had taken his seat amid the whole party at the table, where a scene of honest hilarity occurred which I shall not attempt to describe.

Returning to Middletown—the approach to that city is beautiful from almost every quarter. The river spreads out in the form of a lake, and has the aspect, from several points, of being entirely enclosed by the green and cultivated hills around it.

In Middletown are several neat and even elegant private houses. The view commanded by the eminence on which the Wesleyan College stands, though inferior in extent to that from a hill in the rear, is varied and rich in an extreme. The fine bend of the river just below, with all that art and nature have done for its banks, here presents itself with great effect. Various manufactures are carried on with success, as the small tributaries of the Connecticut furnish much water-power, but no associations exist for the literary improvement of the people, with the exception of a small social library, founded before the Revolution. This is owing, in a great measure, to the emigration of a large proportion of

Library of Congress

the young men to commercial cities. The people of this place have had their full share in forming new settlements at different periods, some near and some far distant. Mr. White, the first settler of that part of the State of New-York long known by the general name of Whitestown, and now embracing several counties, went from this place in 17—, with his axe only, and began with his own unassisted strength to clear a forest, which has now given room to a hundred thousand inhabitants. Human ingenuity and enterprise will be exerted where and whenever sufficient encouragement is offered. While many 95 have felt the impulse which drove them to a new country far away, some have been attracted by the facilities for manufacturing afforded by the streams, and others have been persevering in digging freestone from the valuable quarries on the opposite bank of the Connecticut.

Among the spots of local interest may be mentioned three beautiful little cascades, all within about four miles of the city, one of them in Chatham, on the opposite side of the river. Laurel Grove lies on the way to another, and shades one of the most beautiful winding wood-land roads in New-England; in the spring enriched for a mile or more with the utmost profusion of those shrubs from which it has its name, in full bloom. The stream which forms the Chatham cascade proceeds from a pond at the elevated base of a rude bluff called Rattlesnake Hill, in which is a cobalt mine. It has not proceeded above two hundred yards when it leaps from a rock, and falls into a wild little basin: a delightful retreat from the heat of the sun. The pond is one of the head-waters of Salmon River, or the Moodus. That stream, after rushing through many romantic valleys, empties into the Connecticut, behind a point formed by a sweet little meadow which I had seen before. The country through which it passes was the residence of the Moodus Indians, who had the reputation among other tribes of being sorcerers; and some traditions of them are still found among the white people, to which Brainerd's poetry refers.

A small cluster of houses on the road near the pond have something a little foreign in their appearance; and the names and the dialect of some of their inhabitants excite surprise in the stranger, who knows how homogeneous the population of New-England towns always is. They are the descendants of several German families, brought here some years ago to

Library of Congress

work the cobalt mine, which was soon found too unproductive to pay the expenses. There are other minerals in the neighbourhood, particularly in a lead mine on the river's bank.

I think there can be found no pleasanter route for a traveller during a summer tour than along the river towns from Middletown up to Deerfield. The roads on both sides lie 96 chiefly on the fine levels which generally border this kind of New-England streams, and the villages are all situated upon them, with the exception of Suffield and Enfield. The occasional interposition of a hill or two, and the crossing of a few ravines, afford only an agreeable variety to the journey. The intelligence and good habits of the people, the flourishing condition of the arts, the abundance of the comforts of life, and the homogeneous society, still almost everywhere preserved, present at every step objects of interest to the observing traveller. Here also are seen the birth-places of many of those who have emigrated to other parts of the Union, assisted in clearing the Western forests, and in pressing on civilization far towards the interior of the continent. Here we see schools where men have received the first rudiments of the learning they have afterward displayed on the benches and in the legislatures of states, which, when they were building, were without a name, or perhaps an inhabitant.

The limits which I have mentioned include the sites of the first settlements on the river, excepting only the military one at Saybrook. The convenience of travelling is greatly increased by the fine rows of trees, which, with some interruptions indeed, line the roads the whole distance. I have not been able to ascertain whence arose the ancient practice of thus decorating the streets and high-roads; but from my earliest recollection, the fine elms, spreading their noble branches over my head, excited my admiration. Many of them are of great age; indeed, trunks are standing, and others have been recently removed, which seem to claim a date coeval with, or anterior to, the clearing of the forests. In many places, particularly in some of the villages, the finest trees, of extraordinary growth, form two, three, or four lines, and overshadow the broad path, while their trunks are at the same time so naked as not to shut out the view around. The sight of a fine tree is impressive; but

Library of Congress

a journey of seventy or eighty miles through such a grove fosters feelings of a delightful and exalting nature.

97

CHAPTER XII

Hartford—Charter Hill, the Seat of the Willis Family—Public Institutions—Society—Antiquities.

Hartford may be taken as a specimen of the whole country: on every side are seen marks of a former more quiescent state of things, while a hurrying, populous, and prosperous current, which has since set in, is rapidly flowing on. A few of the habitations of old times remain, with many of the sound sentiments and excellent habits of former days; but as the former have been generally improved by modern hands, or at least furnished with comforts formerly unknown, without losing their pristine character or their venerable aspect, so where the good sense, intelligence, and religion of former days are found, they appear to have been rendered at once more valuable among their contrasts, and more extensively useful through the new channels now opened for their exercise. Every thing indicates the great revolution which has taken place within a few years in the employments of the active people of New-England, where so many hands are now engaged in manufactures, and the agency which has converted the nation into a race of nomades during a large part of the year. The strokes of hammers and the rolling of wheels are frequently heard, and many steamboats and stage-coaches are daily arriving and departing.

After visiting the public institutions, in which Hartford has become very rich, and enjoying more of the society than I have leisure to weigh or estimate, I paid a visit to Charter Hill, until lately the seat of the Willises. It has passed out of the family, after having been occupied by them for a century and a half or more; and I am the more anxious to describe it because it may soon lose such of its ancient characteristics as it yet retains. The estate lie upon the 9* 98 last prominent angle of an elevated range of beautiful level ground,

Library of Congress

which rises above the south meadows of Hartford, and makes a conspicuous appearance from the river, its banks, and several parts of the city, while it overlooks a large part of Hartford, and the fertile course of the Connecticut for some miles. The garden occupies the level to the verge of the descent, having the venerable old mansion on the north, and a remnant of the orchard on the east, where I suppose stood in former times a block-house, for defence against the Indians. At the foot of the hill, and shading the street, still stands the ancient oak in full vigour, though tradition says that it was left a full-grown tree when the native forest was levelled around it.

A smooth and verdant descent, in some places too steep to be safely passed, leads from the elevation towards the level of the extensive meadows below, on one of the upper levels of which the Indians once annually pitched their wig-wams in the summer-season, and where now are seen countless fields of grass and grain, often divided by fine rows of trees, and occasionally bordered with bowers of native grape-vines. The ancient oak, which has furnished so many generations of sportive children with acorn cups and a really sublime object for their admiration, shows as yet no token of decay, but bids fair to flourish yet for another century. The charter of Connecticut colony, which owes its preservation to this faithful trunk, seems to have imbued it in return with perpetual life; and the tree is regarded with peculiar veneration for its connexion with that important event in the history of the country.

I did not expect, when I began to speak of Charter Hill, to find leisure to say a word of the people of Hartford or their public institutions, several of which do great honour to their liberality and intelligence. Having a few minutes, however, I will say, in the first place, that the American Asylum for the Deaf and Dumb is the first institution of the kind ever founded in America, and has not only encouraged the establishment of all others existing in the Union, but has caused them to be conducted on one plan, and that probably the best in the world. The Retreat for the Insane 99 (which by the way owes its existence chiefly to the enlightened philanthropy of the original projector of the asylum, the late Dr. Cogswell) has been conducted ever since its foundation on the most improved principles,

Library of Congress

and aided in bringing about an era in the treatment of insanity at which humanity has great reason to rejoice. The learned and persevering gentleman under whom this institution rose to an exalted reputation, the late Dr. Todd, is acknowledged to have effectually cured a greater proportion of the cases he has treated than any person in America or Europe. And how consoling is the reflection, that the treatment now dispenses with all the harsh measures, the compulsory means, both corporeal and mental, to which not many years ago the insane were subjected in hospitals, under the most ill-founded theories. How consoling must it be to those who come hither to intrust their afflicted friends to the skill of the officers, to see the comfortable plan and arrangements of their destined abode, the intelligent and gentle manners of the superintendent, matron, physicians, and nurses, and to learn that the female department is under the frequent inspection of a committee of the ladies of the city, among whom the sufferers of their own sex are sure to find the most delicate sympathy! How interesting it is to every visiter of feeling, to look upon the well-proportioned edifice, the spacious enclosure, and the agreeable scenery around, to reflect that they are all rendered subservient to the restoration of the immortal mind to the exercise of its native powers, and the cure of those diseases which invade and lay waste the nobler part of man: the reconstruction of that edifice whose grandeur is most astonishing when it is viewed in shattered fragments!

Marks of unusual refinement and delicacy are found among the society of Hartford, such as we might expect among persons who have in some sense the oversight of so many objects of charitable interest. The ladies do not observe the pupils of the Deaf and Dumb Asylum, or hear of or visit the tenants of the Retreat, without feelings of compassion and disinterestedness; and the persons employed in those institutions have opportunities for studying the nature 100 of the mind which few others possess: It is necessary for an intelligent observer to witness but one lesson in a class of the deaf and dumb, to see that the course of instruction must develop the faculties of the pupils, and especially of the teacher, in an extraordinary degree. It was foretold of the Rev. Mr. Gallaudet some years ago, and very soon after his return from Europe, at the commencement of the American

Library of Congress

Asylum, that he was in a way to become a distinguished benefactor to his country, by introducing improvements into the principles of general education. And how fully has experience proved the foresight of this remark! With a heart of the warmest philanthropy, and a mind at once judicious, penetrating, inventive, and persevering, he has produced several books for the elementary instruction of children in morals and religion, which have taught many a parent to do what has been for ages considered impossible, and encouraged them to undertake more, while it has procured for many a child advantages often denied to persons of mature age.

There is to be found in Hartford a considerable amount of literary and scientific knowledge and taste. Beside those residents of both sexes who have devoted time to reading, the collection of specimens, the rearing of plants, &c. Washington College, which was established a few years since, in a commanding situation in the immediate environs, has exercised some favourable influence in this respect. Several schools for young ladies, at different periods, have also had their share in raising and supporting the intellectual character of the city. Among them was one taught a few years since by Miss Huntley, now Mrs. Lydia H. Sigourney, who has distinguished herself as one of the best female writers of our country, in poetry and prose, and who has done more with her pen than almost any other of her sex in the United States, to elevate public sentiment, and to show the holy union which exists between religion and pure, exalted literary taste. During a few years in which she was devoted to the instruction of young ladies in this city, she employed her leisure in cultivating her own mind and heart, and in contributing to the enjoyments of a 101 social circle of which she was a member. A small literary society of which she was the founder, like the school which she instructed, was a source of moral and intellectual benefit to the various spheres in which its members since have moved. It was more rare then than now to see such exertions made, and crowned with such success; and it is not easy to describe how unpromising appeared the project of forming such an association among the youth of such a town, or how gratifying was the surprise caused by its prosperity. Several larger and more public associations now exist in Hartford,

Library of Congress

the number of inhabitants having become nearly double, and the general interest in favour of intellectual improvement throughout the larger and many of the smaller towns in this part of the country having increased in an equal ratio; and to their members it will be gratifying to learn that, such societies early received the sanction and aid of such an individual as Mrs. Sigourney.

The Goodrich Association hear literary, scientific, or moral lectures every week through the winter from some of their members; while the debates of the Ciceronean Lyceum also interest a large number, principally of the young. A social library, of considerable extent and value, established many years ago, has had an influence on the literary character of the people, though lately more than heretofore, as it is an important characteristic of all the means of knowledge that they powerfully assist each other's operation. The Sabbath-schools are in a most flourishing state; and wherever this is the case, not religion and morals alone find benefit in them, but useful knowledge of every kind is powerfully promoted. There are now no less than ten or twelve churches in the city, all which, with two or three exceptions, have Sabbath-schools connected with them. A society, consisting of all the teachers, has existed for ten years. I had the gratification of seeing them on the anniversary of American Independence proceed from the central church, after a public service for the occasion, and move by schools and classes, under their appropriate teachers and superintendents, to a beautiful grove of young maples which closed overhead, and formed a complete canopy for 102 the street, to join their voices in sacred music and listen to an appropriate address. The spot, it happened, was near that formerly the annual scene of a public dinner on the fourth of July; and the reflection that so gratifying a change had taken place in its celebration gave double interest to the scene. There were none of the decorations or ensigns of war now displayed. And indeed why should powder and steel have all the honour of that conquest which was effected primarily by the virtue and intelligence of our fathers? We were presented with a procession of some hundreds of children, the boys generally in blue jackets and white pantaloons, and the girls in white frocks tied with blue ribands, all with cheerful faces, neat and well-behaved.

Library of Congress

More books are annually published in this place than in any other in New-England, only excepting Boston, as I believe. The amount it is difficult to estimate. In addition to other machines employed, three steam-presses are now in operation.

In the old burying-ground in Hartford, in the rear of the centre church, are three ancient monuments, in good preservation, side by side, erected to the memory of three of the most distinguished men among the founders of the colony. They were originally placed over the graves, in some spot, I believe, not far from where they now are. They are simple slabs, of red sandstone or freestone, about five inches in thickness, raised on blocks of the same, and fortunately of a lasting material, for after so long an exposure to the elements they are almost entire, and their inscriptions are easily legible. The following is a copy of the first epitaph on the northern stone:—

HERE. LYETH. THE. BODY. OF. YE HONOVABLE. JOHN. HAYNES, ESQR FIRST.
GOUVERNOUR. OF YE COLONY OF CONNECTICVTT IN. NEWINGLAND. WHO. DYED
MARCH. YE. J. ANNO DOM 165³/₄

There are two other similar inscriptions on the same 103 stone: one to the “Rev. Mr. Joseph Haynes, minister of the first church in Hartford, who deceased on the twenty-fourth of May, Anno Dom. 1769, aged thirty-eight years;” and the last to “Mrs. Sarah Haynes, relict of Mr. Joseph Haynes, who deceased November the 15th, Anno Dom. 1705, in the sixty-seventh year of her age.”

The middle stone bears the following inscription:—

In memory of the Rev. Thomas Hooker Who in 1636 with his assistant Mr. Stone removed To Hartford with about 100 persons, where he Planted ye first Church in Connecticut An eloquent, able and faithful Minister of Christ. He died Iuly 7TH æt LXI

the following is the inscription on the third or southern stone:—

Library of Congress

R An epitaph on M Samuel Stone, Deceased ye 61 yeare of his age Ivly 20 1663.
Newengland's glory & her radiant crowne, Was he who now on softest bed of downe,
Til glorious resurrection morne appeare, Doth safely, sweetly sleepe in Jesus here. In
nature's solid art, & reasoning well, Tis knowne, beyond compare, he did excell: Errors
corrupt, by sinnewous dispute, He did oppvgne, & clearly them confute: Above all things
he Christ his Lord preferrd, Hartford, thy richest jewel's here interd.

These inscriptions are copied as closely as the type of the present day will allow. The originals are among the most interesting relics in our country, and may, to all appearance, yet be preserved for centuries, even in the open air, if properly protected from injury. The liberal-minded people of Hartford would honour themselves and the memory of their pious ancestors, by surrounding these invaluable monuments with some sufficient barrier,

104

CHAPTER XIII.

Narrative of a Visit to the Springs in the last Century—Newspapers.

A friend of mine, who possesses a most accurate memory, has furnished me with the following account of a visit she made to the Springs in the year 1791, in company with several of her acquaintances, male and female. Thinking it may prove in some respects interesting to my readers, to have an opportunity to compare the present with the past, I have thought proper to insert it nearly in the words in which I received it.

The party originally consisted of five, viz. three gentlemen and two ladies, who travelled with two gigs (then called chairs) and a saddle-horse. Their first plan was to proceed only to "Lebanon Pool," now known as Lebanon Springs, and after a short visit there to return: some of their friends, who had spent a little time there in preceding years, having made a pleasing report of the place. The grandmother of one of them, it was recollected, had returned from "the Pool" one pleasant day before the Revolution, and dismounted from her

Library of Congress

side-saddle, in a dark-coloured josey and petticoat, with the dignity proverbial of those old times, yet told of her cooking for dinner the pease picked by the gentlemen at that ancient watering-place.

From Hartford the party proceeded westward; and some idea may be formed of the fashions from the dress of one of the ladies, who wore a black beaver with a sugar-loaf crown, eight or nine inches high, called a steeple crown, wound round with black and red cord and tassels, being less showy than the gold cord sometimes worn. Habits having gone out of fashion, the dress was of "London smoke" broad-cloth, buttoned down in front and at the side with twenty-four gilt buttons, about the size of a half-dollar. Long 105 waists and stays were in fashion, and the shoes were extremely sharp-toed and high-heeled, ornamented with large paste buckles on the instep. At a tavern where they spent the first night, the ladies were obliged to surround themselves with a barrier of bean-leaves to keep off the bugs which infested the place; but this afforded only temporary benefit, as the vermin soon crept to the ceiling and fell upon them from above. The Green Woods, through which the road lay for many miles, were very rough, and in many places could not be travelled in carriages without danger. They scarcely met anybody on this part of the way, except an old man with a long white beard, who looked like a palmer on pilgrimage to the Holy Land; and his wife—who rode a horse on a saddle with a projecting pommel, then called a pannel, and a single iron chain for a bridle—was as ugly as one of Shakspeare's old crones.

The few habitations to be seen were so uninviting, that the travellers usually took their meals in the open air, in some pleasant spot under the trees, and often by the side of a brook, the recollection of which is pleasant even to this day. After three days they reached Hudson, where they were introduced to a very pleasant circle by a friend who resided in the place, and after sufficient repose they proceeded. A gentleman, who had come to attend a ball, here joined the party, sending a messenger home for clothes; and although he did not receive them, and had only his dancing dress, persisted in proceeding with them. He mounted his horse, therefore, in a suit of white broad-cloth, with powdered hair,

Library of Congress

small-clothes, and white silk stockings. While at Hudson, it had been determined that they would go directly to Saratoga, where several of the inhabitants of Hudson then were; the efficacy of the water in restoring health being much celebrated, as well as the curious round and hollow rock from which it flowed. Hudson was a flourishing village, although it had been settled but about seven years, by people from Nantucket and Rhode Island.

In the afternoon the prospect of a storm made the travellers hasten their gait, and they stopped for the night at an 10 106 old Dutch house, which, notwithstanding the uncouth aspect of a fireplace without jams, was a welcome retreat from the weather. The thunder, lightning, and rain soon came on, and prevailed for some hours, but left a clear sky in the morning, when the party proceeded, and reached Albany at breakfast-time. Some of the party were greatly alarmed at the sight of an old woman at a door in one of the streets, with her face shockingly disfigured by the small-pox, in a state of activity, for one of the ladies had never had that disease, and was near enough to be exposed to the contagion. By the presence of mind of her companions, however, she was prevented from observing the painful object, and from such apprehension as they felt for her, until the time for the appearance of the disease had passed. The old Dutch church, with its pointed roof and great window of painted glass, stood at that time at the foot of State-street.

At Troy, where the travellers took tea, there were only about a dozen houses: the place having been settled only three years by people from Killingworth, Saybrook, and other towns in Connecticut. Lansingburgh was an older and more considerable town; containing apparently more than a hundred houses, and inhabited principally by emigrants from the same state. The tavern was a very good one; but the inhabitants were so hospitable to the party, who were known through mutual friends, that the time was spent almost entirely at private houses. After a delay of two nights and a day, they proceeded on their journey. Crossing the Hudson to Waterford by a ferry, they went back as far as the Mohawk to see the Cohoes Falls, of which they had a fine view from the northern bank, riding along the brow of the precipice in going and returning.

Library of Congress

On the road to the Mohawk the travellers met a party of some of the most respectable citizens of Albany in a common country wagon, without a cover, with straw under feet, and with wooden chairs for seats: their family-coach being too heavy for short excursions. Two gentlemen on horseback, in their company, finding that our travellers were going to Saratoga, offered to accompany them to the scene 107 of battle at Behm's Heights, and thither they proceeded after visiting the Cohoes.

"We dined," said my informant, "in the house which was General Burgoyne's headquarters in 1777; and one of the females who attended us was there during the battle. She informed us of many particulars, showed us a spot upon the floor which was stained with the blood of General Frazer, who," she added, "when brought in mortally wounded from the field, was laid upon the table at which we were seated. During the funeral, the American troops, who had got into the British rear on the opposite side of the river, and had been firing over the house, on discovering the cause of the procession up the steep hill, where Frazer had requested to be interred, not only ceased firing, but played a dead march in compliment to his memory."

"On leaving the battle-ground for Saratoga Lake, our party were reduced in number to four by the loss of four gentlemen; two of whom, however, intended to overtake us, if possible, before night. The country we had now to pass over, after leaving the banks of the Hudson, was very uninviting, and almost uninhabited. The road lay through a forest, and was formed of logs. We travelled till late in the afternoon before we reached a house, to which we had been directed for our lodging. It stood in a solitary place, in an opening of the dark forest, and had so comfortless an appearance, that without approaching to take a near view, or alighting, we determined to proceed farther. It was a wretched log-hut, with only one door, which had never been on hinges, was to be lifted by every person coming in and going out, and had no fastening except a few nails. We halted at the sight of it; and one of the gentlemen rode up to take a nearer view. Standing up in his saddle, he peeped into a square hole which served as a window, but had no glass nor shutter, and found the

Library of Congress

floor the bare earth, with scarcely any furniture to be seen. Nothing remained for us but to proceed, and make our way to the Springs as fast as possible; for we knew of no human habitation nearer; and when or how we might hope to reach there, 108 we could not tell. We were for a time extremely dispirited, until the gentleman who had joined us at Hudson came forward (still in his ball-dress), and endeavoured to encourage us, saying, that if we would but trust to his guidance, he doubted not that he should be able to conduct us safely and speedily to a more comfortable habitation.

“This raised our hopes; and we followed him cheerfully, though the day was now at its close, and the forest seemed thicker and darker than before. When the last light at length had disappeared, and we found ourselves in the deepest gloom, our guide confessed that he had encouraged us to keep us from despair; and that as to any knowledge of the road, he had never been there before in his life. He however dismounted, tied his horse behind our chair, and taking the bridle of our own, began to lead him on, groping his way as well as he was able, stepping into one mud-hole after another without regard to his silk stockings, sometimes up to his beauish knee-buckles. It seemed as if we were going for a long time down a steep hill into some bottomless pit; and every few minutes one wheel would pass over a log or a stump so high as almost to upset us. At length we insisted on stopping, and spent a quarter of an hour in anxiety and doubt, being unable to determine what we had better do. We heard the voices of animals in the woods, which some of us feared might attack us. At length one of the gentlemen declared that a sound which we had heard for some time at a distance, could not be the howl of a wolf, for which we had taken it, but must be the barking of a wolf-dog, and indicated that the habitation of his master was not very far off, proposing to go in search of it. The gentlemen were unwilling to leave us alone; but we insisted that they might need each other's assistance, and made them go together. But it was a long time before we heard from them again. How long they were gone I do not know, for we soon became impatient and alarmed; but at length we discovered a light among the trees, which shining upon the trunks and boughs, made a beautiful vista, like an endless Gothic arch, and showed a 109 thousand tall columns on

Library of Congress

both sides. We discovered them returning, accompanied by two men, who led us off the road, and stuck up lighted pine knots to guide our friends.

“Under their guidance we found our way to a log-house, containing but one room, and destitute of every thing except hospitable inhabitants; so that, although we were admitted, we found we should be obliged to make such arrangements as we could for sleeping. There was no lamp or candle: light being supplied by pine knots stuck in the crevices of the walls. The conversation of the family proved that wild beasts were very numerous and bold in the surrounding forest, and that they sometimes, when hungry, approached the house; and there was a large aperture left at the bottom of the door to admit the dogs when in danger from wolves. The floor extended on one side but to within the distance of several feet of the wall, a space being left to kindle the fire upon the bare ground; and when we wanted tea made, the mistress of the house could produce only a single kettle, in which water was boiled for washing and every other purpose. She had heard of teakettles, but had never seen one; and was impressed with an idea of the usefulness of such a utensil. When we had spread the table, out of our own stores, and divided tea-cups and saucers, a porringer, &c., among us, we seated ourselves, partly on the bedstead, and partly on a kind of arm-chair, which was formed by an old round table when raised perpendicularly, and thus partook of a meal.

“We were, however, suddenly alarmed by cries or screams at a little distance in the forest, which some of us supposed to be those of wolves or bears. Our host, after listening a while, declared his belief that they were the cries of some travellers who had lost their way, and proceeded with the gentlemen to search for them. They found our two expected friends, who had followed the path lighted by the torches, but unfortunately wandered from it a little, and soon found before them a wall too high to reach from their stirrups. They attempted to retreat; but found it also behind them; and though they rode round and round, feeling for a place of exit, could find none, and then began to call for assistance, hoping that some dwelling might be within the reach of their voices. Being happily relieved and restored to us, the adventures of the evening served as a subject of

Library of Congress

pleasantry. They had unconsciously entered a pound or pen for bears, by a very narrow entrance, which in the darkness they could not find again, and thus their embarrassment was fully explained. We slept that night on our luggage and saddles; but our hospitable hosts refused all reward in the morning.

“On reaching the Springs at Saratoga, we found but three habitations, and those poor log-houses, on the high bank of the meadow, where is now the western side of the street, near the Round Rock. This was the only spring then visited. The houses were almost full of strangers, among whom were several ladies and gentlemen from Albany; and we found it almost impossible to obtain accommodations, even for two nights. We found the Round Rock at that time entire; the large tree which some years since fell and cracked a fissure in it being then standing near, and the water, which occasionally overflowed, and increased the rock by its deposits, keeping the general level three or four inches below the top. The neighbourhood of the Spring, like all the country we had seen for many miles, was a perfect forest; and there were no habitations to be seen in all the vicinity, except the three log-houses, which afforded us little more than a shelter. We arrived on Saturday, and left there on Monday morning for Ballston, which we reached after a short ride. But there the accommodations for visitors were still less inviting. The Springs, of which there were several, were entirely unprotected, on the borders of a woody swamp, and near the brook, in which we saw bubbles rising in several places, which indicated other springs. There were two or three miserable habitations, but none in which a shelter could be obtained. There was a small hovel, into which some of the water was conducted for bathing; but as there was nothing like comfort to be found, we proceeded homeward after spending a short time at the place.”

Such is a brief account of a journey to the Springs in the 111 last century; and how difficult it is to realize that the changes which have since occurred can have taken place within the life of man! And yet, where do we look without finding evidence of similar, if not equal alterations, often effected in a shorter period?

Library of Congress

On the road up Connecticut River, over which I passed at such a rate as to give me little opportunity to record or even to make many remarks, every one must be struck with the size and number of the manufactories which have been multiplied and magnified to such an extent all over the country within a few years.

At **** I saw the name of John Tympan, an old schoolmate, on a tin sign over the door of a printing-office; and recollecting that I had heard of his being the experienced editor of the village journal, I revived the acquaintance of past days, and lounged several hours in his room during my stay in the place. The conversations I there held and overheard, with the little I had known of the press and its appurtenances (viz. public taste and such matters), in preceding years, threw my mind into a train of thought, which, if I were to judge from the well-known soporific qualities of Mr. Tympan's sheet which I had in my hand, was probably indulged in during a short slumber. First, I fancied I saw all the forms in which the Chinese wooden stereotype has ever appeared, and those through which have passed the type of Europe since they left the hands of Guttenburg, Janssoen, Faust, and Shoffer, till they reached those of Firmin Didot and his English rivals. And what a mass was there! Centuries of black letter, succeeded by the floods of light-faced type, which may be said to have been the chief means of "illuminating" the world since the cry for knowledge has extended beyond the walls of convents. And the sight may be better imagined than described! Then came a whole parque of presses, more numerous than the abortive models of machines in the Patent-office at Washington, presenting all possible applications of the lever, screw, wheel, weight, plane, &c., except the most useful. There was the old Ramage press, the first which I recognised as an acquaintance, and I looked upon its lumbering uprights and simple sweeping lever with a degree of reverence, because its physiognomy revived the impressions of childhood, when I had contemplated it as *the press*, though, its plan is exploded, and the power of muscle and the ages of days' works that are now seen to have been wasted upon it, might have made fifty canals across Darien. Next came to my view the folios, the quartos, the octavos, and the rest of their family down to double twenty-four-mos, with their various bindings, gildings, clasps,

Library of Congress

and embossings displayed, and their fluttering leaves showing hints of their contents. A deluge of ideas floated through my mind at the sight; as I turned from the books which boasted only of reviving the fooleries of antiquity with its knowledge, to those monuments of modern invention, in which the giant and the pigmy, the amaranth and the four-o'clock lie side by side.

How forcibly may the quaint words of some of the old books of my vision be applied to the present times!

“Circa hoe etiam tempus,” says Caxton (in continuatione Polycronici Ranulphi Higden, Anglice a se translati, quæ cum opere ipso prodiit Londini a. 1482 (as) circa a. 1455), “Circa hoc etiam tempus:—also abowte this tyme the crafte of empryntyng was fyrst founde in Magounce in Almayne. Why the crafte is multiplyed thurgh the worlde in many places, and bokes be hadd grete chepe and in grete nombre bycause of the same crafte.”

Like as says an “Anonymus auctor” in 1457:—

“Printerys of bokis wer this tyme mightely multeplyed in Maguncie and thurgh out the world; and thei began frist, and they held the craftis. And this time mony men began for to be more sotell in craftis and suyfter than ever they wer a fore.”

After these came such a motley army of mankind as no masquerade ever presented, composed of the readers of all ages and climes, of all hues and characters. These I cannot undertake to describe: but if it be as amusing to others as it was to myself to fancy their appearance, they may agreeably fill up some hour of leisure by recalling them.

113

America suddenly came to mind; and with it the sky seemed darkened with a cloud of newspapers, which were flying off night and day from thousands of presses, whose creaking, clanking, rattling, hissing, and groaning gave evidence of the gigantic strife going on around us, between the cylinder machines of latest invention and the various

Library of Congress

leverpresses which call old Ramage their grandfather, with not a few which have steam or mules for their moving-power, and some with asses for their guides.

CHAPTER XIV.

Music—New-England Villages contrasted with Italy on this subject—A Traveller in search of Health—Burying-grounds—Rural Celebration of Independence at Northampton—Amberst—Academies of Massachusetts—Exhibition.

Every Sabbath on my journey I spent at some village, and was usually much gratified at church with the performance of the choirs. There is scarcely any thing in which we are more apt to indulge false ideas than music. I do sincerely believe that we are rather discouraged than instructed or incited by the example of foreign nations who cultivate this delightful art. Writers tell us of the musical talent of the common people of Italy, Switzerland, and Germany; the genius of their composers, and the native skill of many Europeans with musical instruments. Common readers, therefore, are apt to believe that our countrymen labour under some natural deficiency, which is not to be overcome. When they are further complimented with remarks on the want of ear in America, or the length of time which will be required to train up a taste for music, like a plant of slow growth, many of them believe that every effort would be in vain, and that every hope of seeing an improvement in their day would be presumptuous. We must therefore transplant some languishing Italian troupe from the sties of foreign green-rooms, or tow across the Atlantic some second-rate puffer, as windy as a porpoise, to howl and make the grimaces of the rack, and set our pretenders in ecstasies. Now all this is founded on mere mistake.

In the first place, the people of Italy, who have the credit of being refined in throat and ear beyond all the rest of the race of men, have no more taste than you or I, nor half as much. They listen to street musicians whom we could never tolerate; and as for the performances of their masters, they never hear them. The common people of Italy have no training in music except the chanting in their churches and funeral processions, and the strumming

Library of Congress

of guitars in the streets. The plain matter of fact is, divesting the subject of all poetry—that is, of all falsehood or ignorance—that our farmers' sons and daughters, wherever they attend singing-schools, join the church choir, and practise, as they generally do, at home, enjoy advantages far superior to those of the common people of Italy, who are too ignorant, poor, and degraded to have such advantages in their reach, or to appreciate them if they had. They are not musicians, they do not sing in their churches, the music there being conducted by hired performers, of a character very different from our choirs of volunteers I assure you, and they are not familiarized with refined music. Here is enough to kill one prejudice. As to our natural want of genius or talent, the presumption is entirely gratuitous, and we may challenge the proof, rejecting the idea in toto until it be produced. And so with the doctrine that our progress in this or any other improvement must be slow, because this or that European nation chose to be five or ten centuries in emerging from semi-barbarism—this is as idle as the other, in all applications. Such a doctrine, although it is swallowed and acted upon every day by multitudes of our intelligent countrymen, ought to be rejected, like certain other productions of the Old World which are unsuited to our stomachs. There is no reason why we should not introduce any improvement, physical or moral, to be found on earth, compatible with our state of society. Whoever teaches otherwise teaches heresy. We have superior means, facilities, and resources, if they were properly appreciated, to the nations of Europe in general, to effect any improvement we need; and it is only to believe it, and set ourselves in earnest about it, and the thing would be done. We have no arbitrary government to forbid us, no irreconcilable divisions in society to impede a general co-operation, no impenetrable cloud of ignorance over the public, no lack of the machinery of civilization to rouse the mind or to direct it, no want of intercourse with other quarters of the world, no scarcity of enterprise in undertaking, or of encouragement in success.

Music has led me to these general remarks, because in speaking of this art I was forced to lament in her depression the influence of prejudices totally unfounded, and intolerably discreditable to our intelligence and feelings. Where do we go without hearing that divine

Library of Congress

maid complaining, in some sick and mournful ditty, of the injustice of Americans? And the other fine arts, refining as they might be among us, join in the same plaintive tone. Let us not so far ill treat these our true friends, as to turn away any longer from their calls and requests. Landing upon our shores, we do not meet them with smiles and welcome. They have reason to look here for an asylum and a home; but though among the fairest exiles from the old world, they come with their loveliness somewhat deformed or saddened by persecution or restrictions contrary to their nature, we repulse them from our society, which they might so greatly enrich and adorn. "This is not the land for the arts—we have no native talent, genius, or taste." Our eyes look with pleasure on the beauties of nature, and our ears are pleased with the music of our forests; but wise Europeans have said that we are insensible to beauty and grace, and that centuries must pass before we can hope to arrive at that state of refinement of which they boast.

Although the inhabitants of this part of our country have cultivated sacred music for half a century, more has been done within two or three years to place this delightful art on its proper footing than ever before. A society has been formed in Boston, called the Massachusetts Academy of Music, by which the German system of juvenile and popular instruction has been introduced in several of our cities, and to some extent in the country, chiefly through Messrs. Mason and Ives; the success has been astonishing to those who have embraced the common erroneous views about national genius, native inferiority, &c., &c. This important step, to which many of the rising generation will owe great sources of pleasure for life, has been primarily due to Mr. Woodbridge, the enlightened, philanthropic, and persevering editor of the American Annals of Education; who, after five years spent in Europe among the literary men and institutions of the Old World, returned to his native country three or four years since to devote himself to the diffusion of knowledge, on some of the most important subjects, for the intellectual and moral benefit of America. All that a friend of the country need wish is, that he may impress us all with the great truths he proclaims as strongly as he has impressed some parents with the fact that their children

Library of Congress

have flutes and organs in their throats which may be very sweetly and very cheaply played upon.

A young man, of sallow complexion and emaciated appearance, who was travelling for his health, was on the route with me. He had enjoyed no advantages of education superior to those of a district school, until the clergyman of the village, perceiving in him that insatiable thirst for knowledge which I have so often observed in the young when possessed of true piety, proposed that he should prepare for the desk, and offered him gratuitous instruction. He was the favourite of the whole town, as I learned from other lips than his own, not on account of any external grace or beauty, for in those he was far from being rich; but because his character was of an elevated kind, and his life one of the most blameless and honourable. No friendly office in his power was withholden from anybody; and how many times in a year may a truly benevolent man confer kindness, if he but seeks for opportunities! Every one in such a village of farmers knew what his neighbours did, without inquiring from mere idle curiosity. Of course the early humble life of this youth were known, as well as his dutiful conduct towards his mother; and all witnessed and were surprised at the mental efforts it required in him, without the aid of conceit or the show of arrogance, to the second rank in society; that is, next the clergyman himself. As his substitute, he often was called to act, particularly in the Sunday-schools. I understood that he felt a strong desire to devote himself for life to some distant mission, but had not yet formed any ultimate determination. His knowledge of such passing information, however, as abounds in the reports and publications of religious and benevolent societies, had at once expanded his mind and his heart, and rendered him an instructive companion to those who had a taste on such subjects. He had therefore been urged by his townsmen to take a journey to a more healthy part of the country, when he was found to be in a threatening state, and was furnished by them with an old horse and a wagon, and such pecuniary means as he stood in need of; for he was looked upon as a kind of public property, and may yet live and recover, I hope, to prove an honour to his native village.

Library of Congress

This case I mention as a specimen of one of the ways by which deserving youths sometimes rise among us. As nothing in the institutions of the country, or in the prejudices of the people forbids the exaltation of virtue, her upward tendency is in a thousand cases permitted and even assisted, when in other countries it would be hopelessly discouraged or entirely suppressed. The road to usefulness and distinction is not opened to persons of all classes, in our constitution merely; it is not only laid down upon paper, but is familiarly known and trodden. Hence it is a matter of notoriety, that not a few of the men now eminent in the different learned professions, have risen from the workshops of the humbler branches of mechanical trade where they had been apprenticed. From this fact it might be presumed that the useful arts would be generally regarded with respect; and this is true to a considerable extent, although some of our luxurious citizens, among their multiplied false notions, really believe that there is something in exercising 11 118 an honest handicraft more degrading than idleness in its genteeler forms.

The burying-grounds of New-England are among the most interesting objects to which the traveller can direct his attention. Monuments are to be found, in almost all the older settlements, bearing unequivocal testimony to the learning as well as piety of our ancestors, and the good order which has ever prevailed in their society. I wish, with all my heart, that I could refer to the condition of these venerable memorials as evidence of a becoming regard for them among the inhabitants, and a proper care for their preservation. Unfortunately, quite the contrary is the case; for ancient grave-stones are often allowed to become overthrown by the frost, and to lie covered with moss or herbage from year to year. One single person in each village, by proper means, might incite the people to keep their cemeteries well enclosed, and kept in order; and nothing but a little spirit is wanting through the country at large, to have the most venerable memorials of the dead preserved from unnecessary injury and from loss.

So closely connected are many of these monuments with important events in the history of the country, that we ought to use them as practical assistants in the instruction of

Library of Congress

the young; and parents and teachers might communicate many lasting impressions to their children, by visiting with them the graves of the good and learned men of preceding generations, inviting their aid in deciphering the epitaphs, enumerating their praiseworthy deeds, and repeating some of their virtuous counsels. Why should such simple and delightful modes and topics of instruction be neglected, while much complicated and expensive machinery is employed to fix the minds of the young exclusively on distant nations and countries?

With thoughts like these, and with many feelings which I shall not attempt to express, I have visited many of the burying-grounds, usually at morning or evening, when the journey of the day had been performed, or before it had begun; and thus I have sometimes obtained the knowledge of facts which I had not been able to derive from living sources. I might here insert a few of the epitaphs which I copied in different places; but will merely, at present, remark, that those who have frequent access to old burying-grounds, may perform a useful task by at least copying inscriptions, and making drawings of monuments, and depositing them in some society or institution, to be preserved or published for the benefit of others. The Rev. Mr. Alden, some years since, undertook the useful and pious task of rescuing the best epitaphs from loss and oblivion, and his own memory should be honoured for it. The book containing his collection will hereafter be prized by some generation more worthy of its descent than we show ourselves to be.

I am obliged to pass, without remark, some of the places most worthy of notice to strangers, and among them Springfield. I have not leisure to insert all my memoranda, much less to record all the reflections which occurred to me on this or any other part of my interesting tour. I cannot, however, let Northampton pass without some allusion to the tasteful manner in which the Anniversary of our Independence is usually celebrated in that ancient and beautiful town.

In an orchard which extends to the bank of a little brook, just out of sight from the streets of the village, a spacious bower is formed by adding evergreen bushes and vines to the

Library of Congress

shade of the trees, and sprinkling the dark foliage with flowers. A large table is spread upon the smooth grass beneath; and as the decorations of the place employ the hands of the fair the day preceding that of the celebration, and they preside at the entertainment, the scene is one of the liveliest and most appropriate that can be imagined. In so pure, intelligent, and polished a society, a foreigner would find much to instruct him in American manners, as well as to excite his better feelings.

No village that I have seen in this part of the country has risen so fast to eminence as a literary place as Amherst. I had admired the bold, swelling, and fertile grazing-country, with its fine views, while it was only a common village. How great has been the change! On one of the finest eminences stands the college, now one of 120 the most flourishing in the Union; and two academies, one for the education of females, are found in other parts of the town. The academies of New-England, and particularly those of Massachusetts, form one of the most important branches of the great machinery of public education. Their history shows the importance of making provision for the instruction of the young, even if some of the means adopted be not immediately found as useful as might be desired. In Massachusetts there are sixty-two academies, which derive funds from various sources; twenty-one of them from a township of land each, in the state of Maine. For some years they were generally in a condition far from flourishing, and some in decay. Public opinion having since improved in relation to instruction, these institutions have been rendered extremely efficient in affording it, and will probably become much more so. There were probably about twenty-five thousand pupils in the academies and private schools of Massachusetts in 1832, out of a population, according to the census of that year, of a little more than six hundred thousand. Six of the academies are devoted exclusively to females, and many of them have a female department. The branches of instruction and discipline have been much improved, but not a little remains to be done. One of the greatest evils with many of them is, that they embrace many branches of secondary importance, even when the pupils are to devote but a few months to their studies. Comparatively intelligent as the common people of this part of the country are supposed to be, they are yet unable

Library of Congress

to appreciate the real acquisitions of their children, or at least generally apprehend that others cannot. They therefore demand visible and tangible signs, to indicate to the senses what without such aid might not be discovered or valued. A picture must be painted, a few tunes strummed on the piano, or a few words of some foreign tongue acquired, to bear witness to their intellectual progress—to show that the teacher has returned to the parent a quid pro quo—the value of his money. I have often seen such things displayed; and how much is it like Hudibras's culprit at the bar,—

121

—“Holding up his hand By twelve freeholders to be scann'd, That by their skill in palmistry” they might determine whether the *charge* against him were just or not.

Some of the defects of the system may be seen at an exhibition, such as I once attended, at an academy on the banks of the Connecticut. The burthen of the evening was formed of several dialogues, or short dramatic pieces, in no way suited to the people or the state of society. A little art, I think, might have fabricated good ones; but we are still very dependent on foreign ideas and models, especially in literary matters. The audience there assembled would have listened with benefit to any sensible production. There was an old threadbare and antiquated satire on fashions, aimed, like Sidrophel's telescope, at a kite instead of a star—at the forms of dress now long-forgotten, instead of any one of the thousand follies we practise daily in defiance of reason—and applauded by the audience like a palpable hit. The magnificence of ancient heroes was set forth; addresses were made to engage us:—the Roman Senate, sitting “in cold debate”—(viz. just cracking our cheeks at old steeple-crowned bonnets and hooped petticoats).—“to sacrifice our lives to honour.” Then came up a fearful tragedy, the heroine of which had a provincial tone: “Haow naow! Is that you, Rolly?” Daniel and the lions in a calico den; and Joseph, with two front-teeth knocked out, a head taller than all his brethren, and dressed in a white counterpane, are all I have to mention, in addition, except the tune of “Farewell ye Green

Library of Congress

Fields," played by heroes, orators, lions, and prophets, at the close of this miserable medley. 11

122

CHAPTER XVI.

Female Character—A Connecticut School—Scenery on Connecticut River—Deerfield—Turner's0 Falls—Early State of the Country.

How different are our females from most others in the world! How much is society indebted to their influence; how large a portion of our intelligence, as well as our virtue, do we owe to them as individuals! What would our country be if they were allowed less influence in society? how much like our country might others soon be if they resembled it in this respect! In what does the excellence of our females consist, whence is it derived, how may it best be extended and perpetuated? Such questions as these force themselves upon the mind of a traveller in our country; and how important is it that we should be able to answer them!

In what does their excellence consist? In every thing, some would have us believe; and indeed it would be difficult to find any thing truly good of which they are not the supporters or the patrons, if not the projectors. Let an intelligent traveller but observe, and he will find that wherever there is an upward tendency, a refining process going on, it is promoted by them. They are more dependent than men for their enjoyments on the peace and good order, as well as the intelligence of the society around them; they are more trained to feelings of dependence, and therefore more readily or more entirely cast their confidence on God. They have more leisure for reflection, and can judge with more deliberation and less passion than men, while they have better opportunities to use such means of self-improvement as they possess. As they converse more than men, they more frequently bring their own minds and hearts into comparison with others, and find stronger motives for rendering them worthy of inspection.

Library of Congress

The institutions of our country have denied to females the 123 means of intellectual improvement proportioned to their desires, as well as a proper regard to their sex. In consequence, we find that fashion has too extensively occupied the ground, and that attempts have been made to polish the manners and to ensure external graces. The exaltation and the influence of females in our country are owing chiefly to their domestic education; for none other worthy of the name is yet afforded them, with a very few and limited exceptions. Our best men, indeed, have been, to a great extent, moulded at home, into forms in which they have only expanded in after-life. If there ever was a country in which female influence was exercised in proportion to its value, it is our own. And what is the result? Ask the man whose early instructions and examples have implanted and cherished every good thing which his mind and heart contain, and whose influence longest remains, even after death has removed its source from his sight. Inquire of the father why he labours more cheerfully, values his own character more highly, takes greater pleasure in home, than the men of other countries. Look at our books and newspapers, and see why they are not less pure than they are. You will find, if you have the knowledge and the means necessary to come at the facts, that woman is exercising a control and direction of a most extensive and salutary kind on society. Look where you will, if you see aright, wherever good is to be obtained or to be done, or evil prevented, you will find her or her influence.

In one of the towns in Connecticut (I will not at present say which, although I am now out of the state), I stepped for a few minutes into a school-house one day, and was saluted by such a confused sound of voices that I hardly could remember where I was. The teacher was mending pens for one class, which was sitting idle; hearing another spell; calling to a covey of small boys to be quiet, who had nothing to do but make mischief; watching a big rogue who had been placed standing on a bench in the middle of the room for punishment; and to many little ones passionately answering questions of "May I go out?" "May I go home?" "Shan't Johnny be still?" "May I drink?" 124 My entrance checked the din, and allowed the teacher an opportunity to raise an unavailing complaint of the total indifference

Library of Congress

of the public towards the school, the neglect and contempt to which those are condemned, by universal consent, who undertake the instruction of the young; the manner in which the objects of education are underrated, even by the best members of the community, and the innumerable evils which in this state of things befall the children, the parents, and the public.

Is it possible, thought I, that in old Connecticut, with her two millions of school-fund, the devotion of her fathers and many of her children to literature and general intelligence, with all her influence thus gained abroad, and the reputation she enjoys for fostering education, there can be a school like this? Much to my surprise, however, I learnt that there are many more which are not superior to it. And why is it? I afterwards conversed with individuals of the highest character and influence in the place, men of education, and even literary distinction, who had, I doubt not, made public expressions in favour of the universal diffusion of knowledge; and yet not one of them could give me any real information in relation to the public schools. They thought them indispensable appendages to society, or rather the ground-work of intelligence; and believed they required great and immediate improvement. But what were their excellencies or deficiencies, or by what means they might be improved, they seemed neither to know nor greatly to care. Indeed, they generally had not any certain knowledge of the number of the schools, their location, number of pupils, or course of studies. Those who had attended to instruction in any form, had devoted a little time to the higher schools in the place, at which a small number of the wealthier parents had their sons and daughters; and although they had succeeded in placing them on a most excellent footing, they had never thought how easily they might confer equal benefits on a far more numerous and more needy class. They had never considered how important it is to the moral character of children, as well as to their progress in knowledge, 125 that they should be kept constantly and agreeably occupied in school, or what aid might be afforded to the teacher, in discipline and instruction, by the introduction of a few easy improvements. They had never inquired whether a map, an enumeration frame, or a black board would not be a valuable acquisition, and afford

Library of Congress

opportunities to vary agreeably the dry routine of the day, in which the only changes often are from doing little to doing nothing, or doing wrong. They had never thought that a few bits of different kinds of wood or stone, or a few shells or leaves, might be occasionally exhibited with advantage, and made the foundation of a useful lecture of ten minutes. They had never reflected how a frequent visit from a clergyman, lawyer, physician, or merchant might encourage and gratify teachers and pupils; or how a meeting of teachers, patronized by some of the influential inhabitants, might raise knowledge in public estimation by raising its ministers, the common school-masters. I found a few persons who seemed more sensible, and who had taken active measures in one branch of this subject: they were ladies.

The scenery of Connecticut River presents a constant variety, from the intermingling and alternations of its few general features. These are, the fertile meadows of different breadths which line its banks in so many parts of its course, and in some places form two or three successive levels of different elevations, which are supposed to have been the beds of lakes successively drained; the uplands and the hills or mountains. The lowest levels are overflowed by the high floods of the spring and autumn, which convert them again into lakes, and leave a rich deposit, though they sometimes destroy extensive crops. The second meadows or the uplands then become the shores, or in some cases islands; and boats often float where, during the other seasons, the cattle feed in droves, or draw the cart among the hay or corn-fields. The higher levels are sometimes channelled by rills of water, which have deeply notched their edges in the course of time, and left projections like the salient angles of gigantic fortresses, almost over the head of the traveller on the meadows below, 126 and presenting a pleasing variety of foliage and crops. The light at morning and evening, the winter's snow, the verdure of summer, and the hues of autumn, add their innumerable changes, so that some of the pleasantest of the scenes may be said to be hardly the same in appearance at any two visits. The trees of the groves, which are thinly scattered over the lower levels, are generally of various deciduous species, and afford a rich intermixture of hues in autumn; thus the early frosts

Library of Congress

often tinge the course of the stream with yellow and red, while the uplands are still covered with deep green. The young crops, presenting their countless rows over the level surface of the meadows in the sloping light, offered me one of the richest scenes of the kind I ever witnessed, as I pursued my way alone towards Deerfield.

To one familiar with the history of this part of the country, the journey up Connecticut River is doubly interesting; and, during my short stay at Deerfield, I was more occupied with recollections of the past than elsewhere. This is one of the old settlements, though but of the second epoch, and retains more traditions of early events than any other I am acquainted with. When the English from Massachusetts Bay occupied Saybrook Fort, at the mouth of the river, in 1635, and began the settlement of Wethersfield, Hartford, and Windsor, in the following years, little was known of the stream above, except that the Indians reported that they used it in their canoe navigation to Canada, by making a portage between Onion River and the waters of Lake Champlain, Northampton, Hadley, and Greenfield were early settled; and in 1666 were greatly harassed by the Indians in Philip's war. In the meadow, which I passed through in approaching this pleasant village, ambushes have been repeatedly laid by the wily enemy in former times, desperate contests have occurred, and not a little blood has been shed. At a visit to the place several years ago, I examined the old house, the only one which now remains of those erected at the first settlement, or previously to 1704; the others, except one besides, having been taken and burnt. The inhabitants of this house defended it a long time, until the savages 127 found entrance through the back door, which was left unfastened by a neighbour's son, a boy, who having slept in the house on some account, took an opportunity to leave it in the midst of the fight, hoping to find his parents. The hole cut through the front door by the Indians with their tomahawks is still to be seen, as well as some of the holes made by bullets which they fired into the rooms on the right and left at hazard. One of these passed through the neck of a female, and killed her as she was sitting in her bed.

The uplands rise abruptly on the east, from the beautiful second level on which the village is built. Three or four springs, which have trickled for ages down the steep descent, appear

Library of Congress

to have cut as many deep channels, at nearly equal distances, in the face of the hill. Several projections are thus left, which from some points of view appear like isolated eminences. One of these, called the Mohawk Fort, I ascended with an esteemed friend from the village, who pointed out many spots which had interest in my eyes from their connexion with early events. From him I also learned, that the spot on which we stood is reported to have derived its name from having been occupied, at an uncertain date, by the Mohawks, who are known to have made great encroachments on the Indians of Connecticut River.

From Deerfield I pursued the road to Turner's Falls, on the Connecticut, the scene of the final overthrow of King Philip's power. The river comes sweeping slowly round a point, with a tranquil surface, and passing at the base of a round hill of sand, with a narrow swamp on two sides, seems to one descending its current to flow on without interruption to a long mountainous range, which here presents itself running north and south. At a quarter of a mile below, however, it makes a perpendicular descent of about forty feet, down which, before the dam was erected for the supply of a canal of a few miles, any thing approaching heedlessly went to certain destruction. The sand-hill was the camp or fort of Philip's Indians after they had been driven from the old settlements on the coast; and during a night of feasting, they were surprised by a small body of 128 volunteers from the towns, principally from Northampton, and many of them destroyed. Great numbers, jumping into their canoes without their paddles, went over the falls. Some of the assailants, however, were killed, principally in the retreat, during which they were hard pressed by the rallying savages. The bones of a man were found a few years ago, in a secluded spot among the rocks below the falls, with the remains of a musket, and a number of silver coins of a period not later than the date of this battle: were doubtless the remains of some soldier engaged in it.

Having crossed the ferry to the foot of the hill, I examined the situation of the fort, deserted so long, picked up a few arrow-heads of stone, and bones, took many fine glimpses and several sketches near the falls, and mounting my horse, proceeded by an unfrequented

Library of Congress

route to Bernardston, where I proposed to spend the night. The landlord seemed obliging; and while my horse was receiving the attentions of his boy, I took my seat by a fire. I had just begun to feel impatient at not seeing any preparations making for my tea-table, when he came to invite me into an interior room, if I chose to sit by the family fireside. I cheerfully assented, and spent the remainder of the evening (for it was late when I arrived) in a neat little apartment, in pleasant conversation.

Some of the older inhabitants of this part of the country have a little knowledge of the early condition of the country; though the changes have been so great, and so many generations have dwelt here in undisturbed security, that it is difficult to imagine what were the trials and difficulties of early times.

“Our meadows now are cheerful all,
Our rivers flow in light;
But cedars wav'd their
branches tall
As round her clos'd the night.

“The path which seeks the lov'd abode
You knew in childhood sweet,
Perchance, was that
the captive trod,
Mark'd by the panther's feet.”

129

CHAPTER XVII.

Copies of ancient Letters, illustrating something of the State of Things in this part of the Country early in the last Century.

I have in my possession some old papers, from a family long resident in one of the older settlements on Connecticut River, which afford lively evidences of the state of the country, and circumstances of society, at different periods during the past hundred years and more. A few extracts will here be given, for the gratification of such as may feel any interest in matters of this kind. Our ancestors early made up their minds on certain important subjects, and went immediately and seriously to work. They did not satisfy themselves with talking philosophically, or forming theoretical cobwebs, as so many European writers have

Library of Congress

done, merely for the amusement of a pleasant day. Instead of waiting till the nineteenth century, to ask whether the times, or the spirit of the age, or the march of mind, as the fashionable phrases are, did not demand the instruction of all classes, they began before the middle of the seventeenth, to require it by law. And what has been the result? While, in the south of Europe, ignorance is teaching at this day that knowledge is the highway to vice; the poorest inhabitant of this part of the Union has the noble blood of knowledge in his veins, and can trace it through a line of ancestors uninterrupted for one or two centuries. With this come the habits of conduct and of thought, which are cherished and cultivated by the influences of a virtuous and intelligent society; and hence arise those valuable traits of character which are commonly attributed to this people: traits which cannot be looked for under other circumstances, and which cannot be produced by other causes.

First comes a plan of a fort, which was ordered to be 12 130 built on the river's bank, with the following directions, accompanied with a letter dated—

“The figure of the fort to be built in the Long Meadow, above Northfield, together with the inner building.

“The box a to be placed eastwardly over the river bank; the passage into the mounts to be from the lower rooms, through the floor of the mount, except that at the norwest angle to be from the chamber through the side of the mount. The eastwardly box to be elevated so as to see from thence over the others. The timbers to be bullet proof. The fort to be twelve or fourteen feet high. The timber to lay the chamber-floor on to be so high that a tall man may walk upright under them. The buildings within twelve or fourteen foot wide.

“The inner wall, as well as the fort and mounts, to be made of hewed timber. The housing to be built linto-wise; the roof descending from the top of the fort. The outward parts of the mounts to be supported by timbers, laid four or five feet beyond the corness of the fort, not to be cut at the laying. The lower timber to be heightened by a short piece, and the floor

Library of Congress

of the mounts to be level with the highest timber. The end of the floor-pieces to go under the mount pieces. It will be best to fell the timber in the old of the moon. One of the first services will be to cut and dry good timber for fire-wood.”

“Capt.—

“We have sent Henrick and three men and two squas.

“The three men's names are Eraza, Cossaump, and Joseph, whome you must take into the fort, and release of the English soldiery four of your Englishmen, viz. John King to be one of the three men most ineffective, except the hired men, as I wrote to you in my former letter—and them you release must leave their guns for to supply the Indians, and we shall see them returned, or a reasonable price for them. And King must leave his gun as others do upon the same terms. This you must be carefull to take, and keep an exact account of the day of their release, and of the entry of the Indians, and so of more Indians that 131 may come; and be verry carefull that the Indians be by themselves, and the English alsoe; that there be no talking and tradeing betwixt the English souldiers and the Indians to royle one another and make a disturbance amongst them in the fort nor out of it, but all to keep their places, and be still and orderly; the Indians by persuasion, and the English by comand. I wish you good success, and be verry prudent in all your management. Yours.”

The following letter was written, as it would appear, in haste, by the commander of the fort, in the winter succeeding its erection. It is inserted here to show that the views entertained by many in this country in favour of the encouragement of manufactures are not all of modern date. No doubt it will amuse some of my readers to find such suggestions thrown out more than a century ago, by an officer in garrison, in a small frontier outpost, while apprehending attacks from Indians, and merely, as it would seem, to occupy a little leisure in the dead of winter.

Library of Congress

Fort ,Jan. 9, 1724-5.

“Sir,

“You some time since enquired of me whether I had ever spent any tho'ts upon the circumstances of our gov'mt respecting their medium of trade (viz.) how they might be restored to their original; and I should esteem it a risque to show myself to you on that weighty point, were it not for your undoubted candour to all.

“And my opinion is, that as much as possible to avoid the emitting such vast quantities of bills would be a very likely expedient; and to prevent that I would propose that the tax on all imported liquors should be double what it is now, and on all other imported goods (that we may be suffered to lay a tax upon).in that proportion. The advantages I propose are

“1. All the money we get this way will help to bear the charge of the governm't, and that by the persons most able to bear it; for it is they that drink and wear those imported goods that draw all the effects of this country. And 2. This would tend to suppress the import and also the extravagance and use of such commodities. And 3. This would tend to promote and encourage those manufactories which would produce the most needful commodities among ourselves. Our governm't I know have done considerable to encourage the raising of hemp, the makeing of duck, good linnen-cloth, &c. And if they had at the same time oblig'd such commodities and many others to pay custom (when imported) that do not, it would have done well. This would not only help to pay our charge, but it would also greatly encourage the making of such things in this country—for what is made here as good as that which is imported would command as much as that, when the merch't has paid the duty and advanced his 350 p. cent. upon it. And most certainly when any commodity is under such circumstances that two men and a gove'mt get in their several capacities a living by it, another man yt. can procure the same'commodity without the two lattr. encumbrances must be greatly inclined to do it.

Library of Congress

“If your patience lasts, I would entertain you with one blunder more, which is—I should think it very proper, when the charge is so great, that the country tax should be in proportion; this has been omitted so long that I think it high time to begin; for this also would greatly tend to prevent the passing of such vast quantities of bills among us, which are now (I suppose purely by their multiplicity) become but just half so good as our former money. It's very strange if the wages of such as go to warr can't be so proportioned to other mens' advantages as that 20, 30, or possibly the proportion may be 60 or 100 that stay at home can't maintain one to go to warr and pay him down. I am sensible it would be dangerous at once to make an act that should be so extensive as to make it appear by what time the whole of the bills now extant should be brought in, for by that, rich foreseeing men will monopolize their coffers full, and thereby extort upon poor people that must pay their rates. Therefore, let us now begin to pay every year's tax within the year, and involve ourselves no farther, for we have as many bills out now as all the country can find 133 out how to call in and not ruin a considerable part of the people.

“When bills were first made, it should have been so ordered that they should always have been equal to silver, or it should be enacted that any public tax whatsoever might be discharged by any of the country produce at reasonable rates or prices. I know it is objected that this is to make every salary-man a merchant, which is very much beside their proper business; but there is not one salary-man in this country, but by himself or others does much more than to dispose of his salary when paid in such things, besides the business of his office; and besides, I think, that man is more likely to be a trader who has none of the necessaries of life, and must take money and convert into them all, than he that has all those things and but little money.

“Sir, this is the effects of but one half day, and any man that knows me will say it's impossible it should be valuable, &c., &c”

Letter from a Lady.

Library of Congress

Boston, the 22nd of Feb., 1753.

“Dear M.

“I received your obliging letter of the 18th instant this day, and have conformed myself to your words as well as I am able, though not so well as I shou'd be glad to, being closely confined to the limits of a chamber, where I have been almost three weeks confined by a severe fit of sickness, which brought me near to death. Through the wonderful forbearance of God, my life is lengthened yet farther, my strength recovering, and my opportunity for doing and receiving good yet prolonged. But, alas! I remain insensible of my privileges, ungrateful for mercies, unhumbl'd under afflictions, negligent of my duty! I find 'tis not in the power of Providence, 'tis not in that of the Word, to break and melt the heart: nothing but a divine energy can accomplish a divine work. It appears to me that never a person had more means used with them to bring them home to God than I have had, but how little do I answer 12* 134 the just expectations of God and men! Surely you will be constrained to pour out your soul before God in my behalf.

“I am sorry you should think it wou'd be a trouble to procure the few things you sent for—so far from it, I account it a pleasure; and think myself more oblig'd to you for employing me than you are to me for sending them. The respect you show to the memory of my dear and never-to-be-forgotten sister, I return my grateful thanks for. The removal of so great a part of my happiness renders this world more troublesome, and the remaining comforts of life more insipid. I have been more compos'd since my dear Mrs.—was here than before—her company was of singular use to me, as she is now the most intimate friend I have on earth. I much question whether I shall ever see her again, as she has so many friends to visit, and I can see no prospect that I shall ever go so far from home. I have not heard from her since December, which seems an age.

Library of Congress

“The account you give of the burning of the Orphan House, I am apt to think, is a false report, as we have never heard a syllable of it; and it looks most likely that we shou'd have heard of it by the post.

“Nothing very remarkable occurs to my mind at present. It is a time of general health. Pray when you see Miss—, offer my respectful compliments to her.

“Company coming in obliges me to close, with the offer of my service whenever you have occasion for it, with the assurance of my sincere wishes for your prosperity, and with my humble service to the good Col., his lady, Mrs.—, and yourself, in which my mother joins (my father being absent).

“I am, Dr. M—, “Your most humble servant.”

Pray favour me with a line as often as you can.

135

CHAPTER XVIII.

Erroneous Opinions of Foreigners of our Society—A great political Character—Sabbath School.

It is not very surprising that foreigners have generally no correct ideas, or at least but very few, in relation to our country. Private and public concerns, past and present circumstances, so intermingle their influences, that a mere comprehension of the political system is quite insufficient to render the operations of society intelligible. Every thing seems at once free and dependent. Prices and opinions in one state affect those in a neighbouring one, and often, if not always, more or less, those of the Union, Every man is at liberty to speculate in the staple of any town or county, the houses and land, on equal terms with him who was born on the spot; and may shoe or shave, feed or clothe the people of any neighbourhood from the height of land to the Gulf of Mexico, if they

Library of Congress

will consent to pay him. This causes a constant commotion on the routes, and quickens the circulation to fever haste. The people must stay at home, unless they know where they are going, and why; hence intelligence is necessary. They travel because they know something, and they know more because they have travelled. And these causes, like many others constantly in operation, are continually increasing each other.

But viewed in another light, each man has the peculiarities of his own state, county, and perhaps town, of which a fellow-traveller may sometimes obtain some knowledge by directing his conversation that way. If you are acquainted with them already to some extent, he will amuse or instruct you. Favourable impressions of public intelligence, which perhaps had been raised in me by accidentally meeting several sensible men, were greatly thwarted by the manners and conversation of a person of a different character on his travels.

There was a talkative young man in the stage-coach, who soon avowed himself, by word of mouth, as the editor of a village newspaper, called the Banner of Principle, or the Disinterested Patriot, or some other great name. His forward manners and flippant speech had got the start of this avowal, and already proclaimed him an uneducated, conceited youth, who had been exceedingly flattered somewhere, by somebody, not very long ago, as an extraordinary wit. He was one of those persons whom to see is to pity, if you have any benevolence left after the sufferings you endure in his company. He had set out in life wrong, and was travelling rapidly a road which he must inevitably track back. He was living and breathing on mistake: neither he, nor the world, nor their opinion of him, nor his importance to them was such as he supposed. His pretended friends were attached only to themselves, and really exercised refined selfishness in enduring his society in order to gain the slight advantage of using him as a tool.

He had the misfortune to live in the neighbourhood of an aspiring politician; and having abundance of self-conceit, some smartness, and an acquaintance with the lower classes of society, he thought his apparent currency everywhere was owing to his own talents.

Library of Congress

When, therefore, the editorship of a newspaper was offered to him, he supposed the station was but the meed of his merit; and when I saw him he was already in full business on such slender capital. He had not the penetration to perceive, nor the humility to suspect, any connexion between the friendly calls of Squire Undertow, his confidence in conversing with him on matters of state, the praise of his first essays, and the whisper that he was the best man in the country to conduct a paper which the friends of principle were about to establish; so he was soon set up, like a locomotive on a railroad, and ran rapidly and smoothly along the track which he was not permitted to leave, fancying that while he out-rumbled and out-smoked other machines of his class, he did all, and was reaping all the glory. He felt potent enough to distance 137 every competitor, and despised the weak creatures which threw themselves in the way of his intolerable wit and deadly satire. He had formerly read the models of English writers with some pleasure, and attempted to arrange, with perspicuity, force, and harmony, words expressive of just and ennobling sentiments. But now he had learned that the age of improvement had come, and every thing old-fashioned was to be done away. Where would be the use of writing mere truth, when it would produce no effect? And as for language, his readers, and above all his patrons (that is to say, his payers and admirers), wished him to write with point and pith; and he had already become a rival of the most popular editors in some of his paragraphs, as he had begun to excel some of the noisiest village politicians in slang. All the old ruler of composition comprehend nothing that could equal, or that might not be found in the scope of one word—personality; and his model of rhetoric and eloquence was the “saucy,” but “successful” editor of the *National Fulcrum* or *Lever*—no matter which.

“Our governor,” said he, “is an honest kind of a man—one of the old-fashioned sort—too honest, I tell them, for these times; and his friends think that they can succeed in his re-election, merely because he has done well, without using the means. The article I published last Thursday was meant to lull them asleep, and make them suppose that we were doing nothing to get him out. But we shall show them the next election. The oldest senator in the state won't like to see a new man in his place; and the lower house will be

Library of Congress

all one side next session, like the handle of a jug. The present party, in our county, have got all the old-fashioned people with them, but we're likely to get the railroad interest, because I say something every week about improvements; and as we have taken Captain Bog-ore for a candidate, we shall be sure of the iron-founders in the valley. He's rather a hardware character, however, and the temperance people say they can't 'swallow' him, consistently, because it would be drinking brandy; and he is all but ready to take the head of the anti-temperance society. That would kill us as dead as a door nail, if he 138 should do it at present, for it's hard work to make all sorts of our friends believe what we tell them. But, however, Squire Sycophant says he's the only man that can manage the captain; and as he'll probably be persuaded to be Speaker of the House this year, though he's the most modest man in the Union, I think we shall get along. Now all these difficulties an editor has to be provided against; and it requires a good deal of tact, I can tell you, to know exactly who to touch up, and who to let alone; and when to call names, and how to tell a lie all but, and creep out when you are charged with it, and turn the laugh on the other side by giving them a rap over the knuckles. But things will be so in a free country like ours."

"Ah" said a sedate old gentleman, in the stage-coach, "you pay a high compliment to the spirit of popular government. The press, as I argue from your remarks, is rapidly rising in dignity and purity."

"Why, yes, that is, it is improving in spirit and life, and it is waking up the people, at least in our section of country, where there are men who never used to read who—now take my paper."

The houses at which I spent the night had been duly furnished with the tracts for this month by the Tract Society; there was a Bible in my chamber, bearing an inscription to show that it had been presented by the Connecticut Bible Society to the hotel; and among the newspapers in the reading-room was the last number of a Sabbath-school and a Temperance Journal. Here was new evidence that the spirit of beneficent association was in full operation around me, and turned my mind to consider the amount of its influence,

Library of Congress

annually, monthly, and daily, in the country at large. How a connexion with one of these societies tends to give a good direction to the heart, the head, the feet, and the hands! When a movement has been made for the first time in a village, for the promotion of any such object, by measures never attempted there before, benevolence, activity, independence, and perseverance are often necessary, in a considerable degree, to secure success. It is the nature of every virtue, as well as of the intellect, to gain strength by 139 its own exertions, as well as to incite spectators to aim at similar objects, and to use similar means. Thus it is that every city, village, and hamlet in our country, where there is a Bible-society or a Sabbath-school, may in some sense be said to have had its Owen and its Raikes. But the support of Such societies, and the continuance of their operations, sometimes require greater exertion than their foundation; and hence we often find individuals, among the most busy manufacturers and merchants, on whom the whole labour of some societies, and not always the least efficient of them, depends. In such persons we often find more practical skill and knowledge in relation to the objects of their philanthropic pursuit, than in the whole community around them. If they find little support or encouragement in their own circle, they seek them in a broader sphere, and regard themselves as connected with an extensive system of beneficence, by which their minds and hearts become habitually expanded, and their characters acquire an elevation and a force which, perhaps, no other course of training could confer.

And how interesting is this subject in another view. When a youth is connected with an association of this kind, he feels that he is bound to an upright and virtuous course of conduct, and that any deviation from it will be observed and disapproved. He finds his associates also affected by similar influences, and the whole tone of society purified and refined. At the same time similar pursuits, and the disinterested source from which they spring, establish fraternal feelings as well as mutual respect among the youth of both sexes, which often prevail over all differences in profession, station, family, and property. Individuals also take rank according to their characters, zeal, and ability; and each society presents a kind of little republic, in which votes are not purchased, and offices are unpaid.

Library of Congress

And in this manner not only is the character of the young hedged in from many exposures, but means are afforded for taking with them, wherever they go, the respectable standing they enjoy at home. A Sabbath-school teacher carries a recommendation with him to whatever place he visits, often 140 of greater value than any letter of introduction. He cannot feign a claim to the name, for nothing but habit can familiarize him with the operations of a Sabbath-school sufficiently to converse intelligently on the subject; and many a little Shibboleth would be detected in any one who might attempt to pass for what he was not.

I was once led to reflect on the security which the Sabbath-school often gives to strangers, in forming opinions of each other, and exercising mutual confidence, by having entered one myself, where I was received as a fellow-labourer, unknown, and yet well known. Seeing a stranger enter and silently seat himself, one of the teachers immediately directed the attention of the superintendent to me, who advanced with a respectful bow, cordially gave me his hand, and invited me to walk with him round the school. I felt that this was all in order; and penetrated his heart, because I had often been placed in his situation, and acted exactly as he had done and intended to do. I saw that he took me for a teacher from some distant town, but received me only in the more general character of a friend of morals and intelligence, which I had professed by the fact of entering his door. His doubts were to be settled, while his first duties of courtesy were performing during our circuit among the classes. Some of his remarks on the course of studies naturally led me to replies, from which he plainly inferred my familiarity with Sabbath-schools; and were followed by inquiries concerning my own experience on certain points in which he had found difficulty. Thus the fact of my being a brother-teacher was satisfactorily established. He then apologized for the vacancy of several seats, by stating that he had recently formed the school, at the wish of the different churches in the vicinity, and received teachers as well as pupils from several congregations of different sects, with such recruits as had been drawn from the manufactories on one side and the farm-houses on the other. Without any knowledge of his sect, or a single attempt to ascertain it, he

Library of Congress

respectfully requested another stranger to make an address to the school, when it should close, to which he consented. Seeing a class of children without a teacher, 141 who had come from some of the poorest dwellings in the neighbourhood, I volunteered to instruct them, and was soon seated with the Question Book of the American Sunday-school Union and the New Testament open in my hands, at the lesson for the day. When the hour had elapsed and the speaker rose, I surveyed the assembly with the reflection that hundreds of thousands of children were thus assembled in the country for similar objects, under the instruction of tens of thousands of teachers.

Such reflections are impressed upon the mind more deeply by solitude and agreeable scenery; and nowhere more than on the banks of the Connecticut does nature, animate and inanimate, under a pure summer sky, appear in unison with the Christian's Sabbath.

It is easy to perceive something of the extensive and powerful influence which such associations are exerting upon the minds and hearts, the manners and habits of my countrymen, as well as the importance of having such improvements introduced into the system as might render it more perfect and effectual. Such gratifying interviews may be enjoyed every week. We may part, perhaps, even ignorant of each other's names; but with such feelings as those of Bunyan's friends, who "went on rejoicing, and I saw them no more." Such a morning exercise gives warmth and elevation to the devotions of the day.

Much as the scenery of the Connecticut is admired, a great deal of enjoyment is often lost by not having the advantage of the most favourable light to see it in. The broad and level meadows, with all their fertility, and the swelling hills and woody bluffs which by turns interrupt them, often appear tame and uninteresting when the sun is in the zenith; but when near the morning or the evening horizon, it enhances the richness of one, and shows all the variety of the latter.

The time has not yet arrived when the beauties of nature are to become objects of general attention and study to all classes; but we should labour to hasten it, for our own land

Library of Congress

abounds in them most richly, and the humblest scene can furnish real pleasure to the eye which intelligently 142 observes it, and may assist in raising the heart to objects far above itself. "I have inquired of many plain people of good sense," remarked a highly-intelligent and ingenious gentleman, "to ascertain whether there exists among our yeomanry any distinct conceptions of beauty in the objects of nature; and I fear they too generally look with interest on a fine walnut-tree, merely because they associate with its size its greater value for fuel." And as for hills and streams, he was apprehensive that the first are regarded only on account of the wood or stone they afford, and the other as they contain fish. Certain it is, that while we all possess feelings which sublime and beautiful objects must move, and fashion begins to incline many to talk of scenery around us, as it formerly forbade us to praise any thing American, there is a great, an almost universal inattention to the true principles of taste among our countrymen, which proper means might correct.

We have sufficient native talent around us to furnish pictures whenever they shall be demanded by public taste, and paid for; while for scenes, we are abundantly supplied with them, both for landscape and historical painting. When fashion shall once have turned, I expect to see a strong current setting in favour of the ornamental arts; and I think the great and various changes we have heretofore seen in society, warrant us in the hope that something important is yet in reserve for us on a matter connected with so much that is truly refining. Let our artists, therefore, raise their dejected eyes, and continue to employ their leisure hours in the creations of their rich fancies, or the portraiture of richer nature, believing that the time will come when their productions will be appreciated, and exert their influence upon society.

Such reflections as these, and many more, were excited by a visit I made not long since to a young artist, who has devoted such moments as he could spare from a variety of other employments to the study and practice of painting. He has refused, wisely perhaps, to trust to an art so precarious for the supply of his bread, but has made considerable progress in drawing, colouring, lights and shades, in 143 his leisure, at least enough to gratify friends and please himself. And are there no means by which the attention of many

Library of Congress

youths may be turned in a similar channel, and a portion of their leisure rendered useful as well as gratifying to others? If one had a friend at his side interested in the same object, and painting with him an hour or two daily, he would improve more rapidly than alone; and if their number were increased, the benefit to each individual would become proportionally greater. Now let it be supposed that drawing from nature and painting should occupy the attention of a few persons in every village, and employ the time now spent in frivolous reading, idling at corners, listlessness and vacuity, or even a tenth part of that time: would not a taste be cultivated, a knowledge gained, which might lead to a more just estimate of the art and a higher appreciation of our leading artists? Would they not naturally be better rewarded and more highly encouraged, and the public benefited by turning a little attention to the instructions which the canvass can give?

Again passing over many miles and pleasant villages, and admiring without praising the fine farms and hardy people of Vermont and New-Hampshire, I approach the White Hills.

CHAPTER XIX.

Approach to the White Hills—Bath—Reflections on Society—The Wild Ammonoosuc—Breton Woods—Crawford's—Scenery.

Bath appeared very pleasant to me, for the same reasons that places where travellers find welcome repose at night generally are so: and beside the comfortable accommodations which the tavern afforded me, I had the advantage of seeing the place under the sloping beams of both the setting and the rising sun, which are so favourable to the picturesque features even of the tamest landscape. The 144 village is small, but neat, and had two or three very pretty houses standing back from the street, in the midst of grass and trees, beside a due proportion of shade and open field on every side. Here are two smooth and fertile levels, as regular as artificial terraces, rising from the bank of Connecticut River; and every thing around me retained an aspect appropriate to that stream, though its diminished

Library of Congress

breadth and the wild uplands gave me the painful recollection that here I was to change my route, and penetrate into a more savage and inhospitable region.

As I bade a temporary adieu to my native stream in the morning, and while my horse was taking due heed to his feet up a rough and stony hill, my thoughts pursued its current downwards, through the region I had just been travelling over. How different were my feelings on leaving the Thames, the Seine, the Rhine, the Arno, and the Tiber! I had found nothing there which satisfied the heart like a social or family circle, and the state of society which surrounds us in our own land.

Although no gaudy show of wealth had here in any form been presented to my eyes, I had nothing to regret in the absence of such palaces or equipages as are so much admired by many travelled wits, and occupy so many of the books of tourists. My mind had been agreeably occupied with reflections on the nature and tendency of such a state of society as there exists, the simple causes which had produced such desirable effects, and the measures by which they may be rendered productive of many more. If certain enlightened philanthropists of Europe whom I might name but possessed the facilities we enjoy for contributing to the benefit of mankind; if they were among men and circumstances like these, the results of two centuries practical operation of free and universal education, under a government owing its existence and all its prospects to the propagation of knowledge and the diffusion of virtue, with what zeal, with what hope, with what success would they labour! If I could see those enthusiastic friends of knowledge in France, who have just erected that new and splendid fabric, the national system of public education for the kingdom, introduced to an intimate acquaintance with this state of society, and enabled to apprehend the causes which have produced it, and the objects at which it tends, I am sure I should witness the expression of feelings which they had never experienced before. If the philanthropic Douglass were pitched among such people as these, how much more ready and capable would he find them to be influenced by him, and to render him support and assistance, as well as instruction, for the accomplishment of his designs, which are too pure and lofty for the greater part of Europe in its present

Library of Congress

condition. How much is it to be regretted, that while some of the best men in the Old World are charged with being too much in advance of things around them, ours should remain to such an extent behind the—tide!

The traveller does not realize his approach to the White Mountains until he turns off to follow the course of the Wild Ammonoosuc. If he is alone, as I was, he will find his feelings deeply impressed by the gloom of the over-shadowing forest trees, the occasional sight of rugged and rocky eminences, and the noise of the rushing stream. I do not know another which so well deserves the epithet of Wild. The bed is strewn with sharp and misshapen rocks; the banks show marks of frequent and fearful inundations; and many of the trees have been stripped of their bark to a great height from the ground. It seems as if arrangements had been purposely made to give you a set-lecture on geology, in the laboratory of nature; and you feel an apprehension that it is to be attended with detonating experiments. One of the unpleasant accomplishments of regular scientific instruction I had to endure; and would recommend to my successors to put, at least, a dry cracker or two into their pockets. So far from there being any human habitations in this part of the journey, there are not even berries enough to attract the bears; indeed, there is nothing to be found but the *bare sublime*. Whoever seeks any thing else had better choose some other route. I could not but compare the savage traits of this region with the marks of refinement noticed at an inn I had lately left. I had been accosted on my entrance by a genteel young woman, 13* 146 who, with a singular mixture of simple language, plain dress, self-respect, modesty, fluent, and appropriate expression, asked my wishes; and after a few questions and remarks, which betrayed sense and knowledge, proceeded to assist in preparing my dinner. At the table, which she spread, she presided with unaffected ease and dignity, and made me almost forget an excellent meal by her more interesting conversation. She gave me a sketch of the winter-scenery in this inhospitable region, and showed that there was sufficient reason for bestowing the epithet *wild* upon the Ammonoosuc, which poured by within hearing of the house. After dinner, a little library was

Library of Congress

thrown open to me, and I had a hundred or two well-selected and well, read volumes at my disposal, with a sofa, and solitude for a nap, all which I enjoyed.

In all this I read the effects of a good private and public American education. The young mistress of the house had been taught at the academy of a village below; and, what was of greater importance, had been trained up by a mother of no common character. Some persons would have said that she had been accustomed to good society; but, perhaps, that was not true in the usual sense of that word, though I doubt not that whatever society was around her was good in a better sense: that is, intelligent, simple, and virtuous. But what is generally intended by good society, is that of fashionable life, which is no more able to form such a character as we approve than the wild Ammonoosuc is to make a purling rivulet. To those who know our state of society, it will be sufficient to add, that the lady of whom I speak had been a teacher in the Sabbath-school before her marriage, and betrayed in her conversation an acquaintance with some of those other great systems of benevolence which so much interest, excite, and bind together the Protestant church, while they enlarge the views of individuals, and give a powerful direction to the public mind.

As I proceeded, savage life seemed more and more to thicken around me; and after I had become weary of looking for another habitation among the lofty he hemlocks, trailing with tufts and streamers of moss, I began to reflect again 147 on the civilization I had left. If intelligence, thought I, is found in the Scotch and Swiss mountains, where is there any excuse for its not penetrating the remotest regions of the United States, where population exists? What is the origin and nature of our refinement, and how can it be extended and perpetuated? Who shall answer for us these questions? Who shall tell us how we may best act on this important subject? Where is the man who has given it all the consideration it deserves? Is there a habitation or a university which contains the individual? If so, his thoughts should be known over the whole country; he should preach to us all; he should instruct the nation in their duties and their destiny. Certain it is, that if we would study the

Library of Congress

subject aright, we must divest our minds of foreign views, and think independently and for ourselves.

I shall not easily forget the admiration excited among a party of distinguished travellers, a few summers since, by the manners of a young woman who attended them at supper, in a little country inn in Massachusetts. The friends, who were partly Spaniards and partly South Americans, were so much struck with her dignity and grace in discharging the humble duties assigned her by her parents, that they often made it the subject of conversation hundreds of miles distant. Yet they never seemed able to appreciate the state of things among which she had been educated, and were quite at a loss to account for the growth of such polished manners in a state of entire non-intercourse with courts and even cities. To me it never was surprising that they admired the reality of what they had previously admired only in counterfeits; and as I had some knowledge of the nature of the society to which they had been accustomed, as well as of that in which she had been bred, I saw how natural was their error, how unavoidable, in their circumstances, their ignorance and doubt.

As for good manners, that external sign of internal refinement, those of a genuine nature can never spring from a graft; they are the fruit of a good heart and a sound head. Counterfeits may be fabricated, but it is an expense of machinery often incalculable, and after all their baseness is usually discoverable, at least by those who have any acquaintance with the pure metal. Master Rattlebrain, junior, is sent to a dancing-school by his half-fashionable half-serious mother, not to learn to dance, not to waste time or money particularly, but to form his manners. This is considered necessary in Paris; and the Parisians are the politest people on the globe. This is a better reason than a certain sort of people generally admit in questions of moment; and the youth is perhaps found a few years after improving his manners in the capital of fashion. A whirl of dressing, spurring, tandem, and, perhaps, four-in-hand succeeds, and in a few years you may write his epitaph, if you would tell the truth, "Here lies a victim of good-breeding—falsely so called." Ah, these juvenile frivolities lead to dissipations of the mind and heart, which the

Library of Congress

fond parent sees about as clearly as he does those of the morals and *manners* which too often succeed them when more removed from parental oversight. Yet this springs not from any inherent vice in the pleasing exercises, but more from the want of that sound domestic education and virtuous and sensible example, by which good manners should be implanted and cultivated.

Parents who are easy and refined in their manners, need not have boorish children; and if they give a son or daughter intelligence, and accustom him to talk sense, and to exercise kindness and to show respect to those around him, they need not fear that he will anywhere speak like a fool, or act with impropriety.

My reflections on such subjects, however, were interrupted by the imposing wildness of the scenery around me; and though I may, perhaps, have penetrated further into this matter, I will not longer trouble my readers with such remarks.

After a solitary ride of several hours through Breton Woods, along an avenue cut through the forest, with innumerable tall trees rising on both sides, and almost covering me from the sky, I reached Rosebrook's house. In a world of silence and solitude, the human voice, form, and face are valued as much above their worth as they are often depreciated in the crowd of a city. I had got tired of loneliness, whether of myself or trees, I cannot tell—I believe of both; 149 for I hailed a plain wooden-house, barn-yard, and cattle with real pleasure. I had an offer of dining alone; but, “No, I thank you,” said I, “I have just been alone.”—“Well, the men are just sitting down to dinner,” said the hostess, “and several of the neighbours are here.”—“Neighbours,” said I, “where do you find articles of that description?”

“A door was soon opened, and I found nearly a dozen men standing by the walls round a table, courteously waiting for the stranger to take his seat. They looked so rough in features, dress, and complexion, and were so tall and robust, that I felt as if they would hardly own common nature with a puny mortal like me. Over their heads were deers' horns

Library of Congress

with old hats, and heads of flax hung upon them; and there was an array of the coarsest and shaggiest garments, which intimated that we were hard by the regions of perpetual winter. But greater hilarity, more good-nature, good sense, and ready humour, I rarely witnessed among any dinner-circle of the size. They talked as familiarly of a friendly call on a neighbour six or eight miles deep in the forest, as if it were but a step across the street; and as for wild turkeys, bears,

“And such small deer, They'd been Tom's food for many a year.”

After having got half-way to Ethan A. Crawfords, that is three miles, I was suddenly apprized of a shower, which had approached without my being aware, on account of the restriction put upon my eyesight by the forest trees, which opened to my view only their countless and endless vistas. I therefore pressed on, and at length emerged into more open ground, where the wind blew strongly in my face, drove the rain with violence, and speedily wet me to the skin. I had now reached, as I afterward learned, the mouth of the pass through the mountains called the Notch, where the wind generally blows with considerable force, and always either north or south, as through a tunnel or a trumpet. As I was going at a gallop, with the storm driving hard against me, my horse suddenly sprung aside, in a manner which might have cost me a bone or two a week before, when I was less 150 accustomed to the saddle; and I did not at first discover the cause. We were near the Ammonoosuc, here a small but headlong stream; and the current was dashing down a ledge of rocks a little on the right. My ride was such as doubly to prepare me for the enjoyment of a shelter and society; but the beauty of Crawford's meadow, as the storm ceased, and the sun shone upon it through the breaking clouds, made me linger to enjoy the first scene of beauty in the White Mountains which is presented to the traveller on this route. A broad and level lawn now spread before me, covered with that rich green which the herbage here receives in the short but rapid summer; and the solitary dwelling of the hardy mountaineer appeared, with a few cattle straying here and there. The whole was apparently shut out from the world by a wall of immense mountains in front and on either side, whose mantle of foliage extended nearly to their summits, but left several bald peaks

Library of Congress

spotted with snow, where the elevation forbade a leaf to put forth, or a root of the smallest herb to penetrate. This scene seemed so attractive, that I was constrained to inquire why there were not more inhabitants. The reply presented a sad reverse. For two months only out of the twelve are the mountains accessible, so that few travellers visit the place for pleasure. The meadow, with all its beauty, will scarcely yield any thing in the short summer, so that grain must be obtained elsewhere; and, in short, the place would probably have been abandoned long ago but for the winter travelling, which makes the house the resort of many country people, with their loaded sleighs in going and returning from Portland and other places on the coast. The valley, an object of attraction only during a few weeks, and a great thoroughfare but in the winter, has its alternations of liveliness and almost entire solitude, which are looked upon by the few inhabitants of the spot with great interest, and supply themes for many an entertaining tale of woodsmen and travellers, sleigh-drivers' adventures, and the habits and pranks of wild beasts.

It was arranged that a party of travellers, assembled at the house, should set out at an early hour for the ascent of Mount Washington.

151

CHAPTER XX.

Excursion to Mount Washington—Walk through the Forest—The Camp—Ascent of the Mountain—View from the Summit—The Notch—Old Crawford's—Bartlet.

Waking after a short but invigorating slumber, and recollecting where I was, I found by the splendour of the moon that the time had arrived for our departure. As we saw the tranquillity of the meadow and the majesty of the mountains, which seemed to have marched nearer to us in the silence and darkness of night, the impressions produced upon the feelings were of the most elevating nature. We were soon after buried in the forest, following our guide, who ascertained his course among the vines, brush, and fallen logs, by what seemed to us more like instinct than reason, in the absence as it appeared of

Library of Congress

every evidence furnished to the eye by objects around. The cold dew soon drenched our garments wherever they were brushed by the foliage; but the active exercise it cost us to keep pace with him, repelled the chilling influence with a warm and agreeable glow. We were following up the wild valley through which the Ammonoosuc pursues its early course, like a favourite child among the lovely and secluded scenes of home, far from which its future life will bear it, to return no more. During the tremendous flood of 1826, this brook was suddenly swollen to a resistless torrent, and spreading over the valley, ploughed up its channel, overthrew tall trees, some of which are still left in heaps upon the ground, while others were borne by it into the Connecticut.

We passed the little spot where our guide once stopped to await the rising of the moon to light him onward, and where he was waked by the steps of a bear, which had come to eat the whortleberries growing around him. As we were more rapidly ascending than we supposed all this time, our rapid gait gave us considerable fatigue; and when we approached the little shelters, thatched with birch-bark, stuffed with green moss, and strewn with spruce branches, where we were to breakfast, we were much cheered at the prospect of repose.

A roaring fire was soon kindled between the two wigwams; and, stretching ourselves upon the green and sloping couch which had been prepared for the weary, in the warmth of the blaze, and amid the delightful perfume of the evergreen leaves beneath us, we fell asleep. When we awoke, it was broad daylight, even in that valley, of such apparently immeasurable depth; and after a hasty meal of dry bread and flitches of salt-meat, roasted in the flame, on forked sticks, with the best of all sauces and the highest spirits, we prepared for the most arduous part of our expedition, which now lay before us. Nature seemed rousing from her slumbers; and in such a region motion and repose are alike sublime. Millions of tree-tops gently undulated in the rising breeze, and the ceaseless sound of the rushing brook was heard in the pauses of our conversation. Compared with the large trunks of the trees around, and especially with the enormous mountains, whose

Library of Congress

lofty society we were seeking, our huts, ourselves, and our worldly interests shrunk 'into insects' concerns.

The ascent of Mount Washington is a very laborious task, although a great part of its elevation above the sea and of Connecticut River, is of course surmounted before arriving at its base. I was not prepared to find this noble eminence rising so abruptly as it does from the side on which we approached it. After leaving our resting-place a few yards, and entering a thicker shade of forest trees, we began a steep ascent, over a surface broken by roots, and occasionally by loose stones, which soon checked the ardour with which we commenced it. It was nearly as steep, I believe, as the side of the cone of Vesuvius, though not so smooth. How little do we think, in our towns and cities, in the midst of our indolent habits, of what the muscles are able to perform, or of the pleasure we may derive from their 153 exercise. Three or four men were now toiling up this ascent. Over them the physicians had often bent, I dare say, cogitating what names to give the forms of debility by which they had been stretched upon their beds, and what nauseous drug they should apply to expel once more the evil spirit of luxury. Now, like a vessel just from the graving beach, after setting up her shrouds and backstays, on they went, over stones and roots and every obstacle, apparently as insensible to fatigue as so many machines.

No opening through the forest is afforded during the ascent, by which a glimpse may be caught of the world beneath; and it was long before we had any relief from the sight of close and leafy trees around and above us. The first change which we noticed was that in the species of the trees. This was instantaneous. We left, as it were with a single step, the deciduous forest, and entered a belt of tall firs, nearly equal in size and thickness. After walking among these for a few minutes, they became suddenly diminished in size one-half or more, and speedily disappeared entirely, leaving us exposed to the heat of an unclouded sun. Our guide now cautioned us to look to our steps; but we did not fully appreciate the value of his warning, until we had two or three times sunk with one foot into deep crevices between the loose rocks on which we were treading, concealed by thick evergreen bushes, which were now the only vegetable production remaining. Although

Library of Congress

these gradually became reduced in size, it was not until they had disappeared that we could walk with security. The surface had ere this become less steep, but the large size of the rocks, in many places, with their ragged points and edges, rendered the passage still arduous, and more slow than we could have desired.

Before us rose a vast nodule, of an uniform gray colour, whose summit appeared at but a short distance; but when we had reached the point, we found another swelling convex before us, and another beyond that; so that, having exclaimed that the highest peak in the Union was, after all, not so very mighty a thing, we at last had to qualify the expression, and 14 154 to say with respect, that Mount Washington had some claim to its name. Indeed, when we began to perceive that we were already above the inferior summits, named after several of the other Presidents, which had appeared so great from below and at a distance, we felt that we were in the region of real exaltation; and although Washington was still above us, could look down upon Adams, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, and what not.

When we find a spot where man cannot exist, we want to see what can; and I began to look round for any thing with legs. Black flies, of course, like volunteer jurymen, will not stay where the absence of mankind does not allow them to find employment. Nothing with life could I catch or see but one miserable black bug.

One of the earliest accounts of the ascent of this noble eminence which I ever read represented, I recollect, that the summit was scattered with fragments of the limbs of pine or hemlock trees, bleached by long exposure, and resembling stags' horns. The comparison was a very apt one. These bits of wood have, no doubt, been carried up by some of the violent gusts of wind which are common in mountainous regions. A gentleman once described one which he saw some years ago. A roaring was first heard, soon after the tops of the forest trees on the summit of the opposite mountain were bent violently down, and then many of their knarled branches were seen flying in the air. The wood

Library of Congress

found on Mount Washington has proved convenient to visitors suffering with cold, as it will make an excellent fire.

For ourselves, we suffered most from thirst; and could hardly allow our eyes their expected feast upon the boundless landscape, until we had demanded of our obliging guide to be conducted to the icy springs of which he had spoken. He soon brought us to a hole in the rocks, where, only three or four feet down, we saw a small bed of ice, which was slowly trickling away in tears, under the indirect heat of the sun, We caught these pure drops, and found them a most refreshing draught, This was the highest head of the 155 Ammonoosuc River which we could discover, and we had saved, at least, a portion of its intended current a rough and headlong descent down a dreary mountain.

We had seen the landscape below several times beginning to reveal itself through the mist; but now, when we had prepared ourselves to enjoy it, and taken our seats on the highest blocks of ragged granite between the Rocky Mountains, the Ocean, and the North Pole, we found it all concealed from our eyes. Clouds of gray mist and vapour began to drive by us, which moistened our garments, scarcely yet dry, and soon chilled us to an uncomfortable degree. Now and then acres, nay, cubic miles of clouds seemed suddenly to be rolled away from beneath us, leaving frightful gulfs thousands of feet down, yet bottomless; and these in another moment would be filled with mist, heaped up higher than Mount Jefferson, Adams, Washington, and even ourselves, who were last enveloped again, and often concealed from each other's view.

It now proved that we had chosen an unfavourable day for the ascent; but we had occasional views, which did not however, embrace the whole of the extensive panorama. "There's the lake! There's the lake! There's the lake!" exclaimed Crawford—"Quick, quick, look here!"—and there we saw a bright gleam towards the south, appearing beyond a whole chaos of mountain peaks and mountain sides, gulfs, dens, and chasms. Winnipiseogee Lake had shone feebly out for a moment, between two clouds of vapour, each large enough to cover a whole State, and was but dimly and indefinitely revealed,

Library of Congress

with a large extent of the romantic country on this side of it. But distances were lost, or rather the eye and the mind seemed to be possessed of tenfold their usual compass and penetration; and this, perhaps, was owing to a vast and bottomless abyss just before us, overflowing with vapours like an immeasurable caldron sitting on a volcano, over which the sight and the thoughts had first to spring to survey the sudden scene, so suddenly withdrawn. While the eye rested upon the distant objects, it could not forget the fearful leap it had made, and 156 the poor insect body it had left on the top of Mount Washington.

“Well, there, there, there it opens at last!” cried our guide once more; and turning towards the north-east we saw a vast extent of country, comparatively level, yet with its lines of fields and roads thrown into every variety of curve and angle, showing that the surface was very far from being most favourable either to the cultivation of the soil or the transportation of its fruits. “There’s the Androscoggin; don’t you see it shine like an eel along through that valley?” The bright course of a stream was seen dividing the dark surface of the earth, like the white trunk of a silver birch seen on the verge of a green wood, while its tributaries, less broad and less distinctly visible, gleamed like the branches. The mountain on that side descends a thousand feet or more perpendicularly, as abruptly as the Rock of Gibraltar where it looks on Spain; and nothing can be more dangerous than to wander without great caution, amid such mists as frequently surrounded us. Travellers have been occasionally exposed to great labours, and have sometimes suffered much from hunger and thirst as well as apprehension, by unadvisedly trusting to their own sagacity in visiting this place, often so difficult to find and to leave. A man, or even a party, might wander for hours round the sides of the mountain without discovering any clue to the proper paths, when the vapours intercept the view of every distant object; and even if they should reach the bottom, they might wander in various directions in the forest below.

Towards the west and north we had opportunities to contemplate the scene at leisure, and began to feel familiar with the optical habits of hawks and eagles, by looking upon the world beneath from a sublime height in the air. On the horizon lay the Green Mountains. Distance and the contrast with nearer and more elevated peaks seemed to have

Library of Congress

diminished the whole range to a mere cornfield, or a garden-walk broken by mole-hills. The valley of the Ammonoosuc opened beautifully to view just below us; and Crawford pointed out with interest his secluded dwelling in 157 the midst of the verdant meadow, invaded by few foreign cares, and solitary but for nature's society. Gleams of sunshine and shadows of clouds by turns drew their different pencils over the beautiful picture, revealing more beauties and exciting more emotions than I could describe, or any one but a spectator could fully enjoy.

And all this of which I have been speaking, or rather all that of which I have been thinking while attempting to speak, all this came through the eye—the narrow window of the eye's pupil! Creation! A vast extent of the Almighty's handiwork; tremendous mountains in extended chains, with the numberless minor hills that seemed to tremble in their presence; valleys, plains, and rivers, fields, forests, and villages, all comprehended by a glance of the eye! How diminutive a watch-tower is the human frame; how minute is that telescope, yet how wonderful its power; and what a sentinel must he be who stands within, the inhabitant of the fabric, the gazer through this glass, for whose delight and admiration this scene was spread abroad, for whose temporary use these bones and muscles were bound together, this curious instrument was so inimitably constructed, and for whom are reserved scenes unknown, far transcending all that he himself can yet imagine.

A night of sweet sleep, like that of a child, erased the fatigues of that day.

Having parted from my new friends, who were travelling in the opposite direction, and taken leave of the frank and hardy Ethan Crawford and his family, I mounted again my sorrel horse, after a separation from him of only one day, it is true, but which had been filled with so many feelings that I had a great deal to retrace in my mind to get again at the chain of thought where I had left him. He, however, seemed glad to claim acquaintance with me again; and I rode along the path I had yesterday passed with some fatigue on foot, reflecting on the nature of man which so strongly tends to consult luxury and ease, and the depressing influence they exercise upon body and mind. The motion which the

Library of Congress

animal communicated to my frame was agreeable—leaving the walking muscles in a state of repose, and 14* 158 jarring the whole system. The chest, braced by recent sleep following real fatigue, and by the breathing of pure mountain-air, felt prepared for harmony, like a harp fresh strung with wires of steel. The beauty of the morning light on the sides of the mountains also exalted my feelings, and I could not refrain from a song of praise in accordance with the scene.

I travelled four miles along a level road, winding through a dark forest, without meeting a living thing; when I reached the Notch House, which stands solitary in the little Notch meadow. One would think the level a very low one, as the land is too flat to be well drained. The Ammonoosuc had been left a little behind, when I reached the Saco, a mere brook, which disappeared in front of me behind a rock. Thither the road led me; and a sudden turn to the left brought me into the gate of these mountains, the famous Notch. The scene changed its aspect to wildness and sublimity, and the Saco, breaking its glassy surface into foam, set up a roar which it continued to make for thirty miles, when it reached the meadows of Conway.

It would be pleasant to me to while away a week or two in these mountains, in the fancied society of a tasteful and indulgent reader—one of those patient and forbearing beings whom I imagine myself talking to when I meet with any thing truly sublime and noble in my travels: but I know very well, when I coolly reflect, that it is presumption to suppose that others are of course pleased with what greatly delights myself; and, however unwillingly, must hasten through this gorge, and leave numberless objects untouched: many a thought and sentiment unexpressed. In going twelve miles, between the two Crawford houses, I lost four full hours of which I can give no account, unless by showing the drawings I made in my sketch-book, or deserving points of view whose details are impressed on my memory. Too thoughtless of time even to look at my watch, forgetful of food and rest, I rode and walked, and stopped and stood: the Saco roaring and rushing on one side, and Sorrel plodding along on the other, or gazing at me with the bridle on his

Library of Congress

One of the White Hills, stripped of forest and soil by the storm of 1826.

159 neck. Poor faithful beast! He and I did not arrive at the intended place of rest till late in the afternoon, and had, I presume, the latest dinners eaten in New-Hampshire that day.

Bartlet is a pleasant little village, in a circular meadow, eight miles below the elder Crawford's; and not until I entered it did I feel as if there was any certainty of my ever recovering the exercise of the social feelings. How little do we realize, in the family-circle, the village, or the city, that we are dependent on the vicinity of others for a large part of our daily enjoyments; how many gentle vibrations of our hearts are caused or increased by the movements of sympathetic chords around us; and how, like the spheres, we are bound to our places by a thousand mutual, though invisible, influences. If the savage feels at home in the forest, as much as we do at the sight of dwellings and cultivated fields; if his warmest feelings are as strongly associated with the sounds and objects familiar in the wilds, as ours are with the lowing of cattle, the features and the voices of men, which is undoubtedly the case, who can wonder that only Christianity has been able to induce him to change his habits?

The days I spent on the borders of that most varied and beautiful lake, Winnipiseogee, as well as in approaching and leaving it, with the fish in its waters, the fowl on its shores, the deer in its groves, and the islands on its bosoms; these and the scenes of contentment, activity, and thrift presented along the Merrimack I must pass over in silence. It is time we were at the great centre of all this eastern country: so, without waiting to learn how the luxuries of the soil find their way to the capital, or how its many fashions and other influences are sent back in return,—let us hasten to Boston.

160

CHAPTER XXI.

Library of Congress

Boston—Environs—Literary Institutions—Mount Auburn—Remarks on our Intellectual Machinery.

Boston is situated on ground favourable to the display of the city from almost every point in the vicinity. The surface rises towards the centre, at Beacon Hill, where the dome of the State House presents a conspicuous object. The acclivity at the same time exposes to view not a few of the larger edifices in different streets. The irregularity of surface, however, has its disadvantages; and some of the streets are inconvenient and even dangerous in slippery seasons. The heart of the city defies the straightening hand of improvement; but the quays and the adjacent streets are of a size and regularity which our larger capitals might envy. The wharves, while they attest the natural defect of the harbour, bear honourable evidence to the taste and enterprise of the merchants; and the market is the most splendid in the country. The fine white granite, which is used so much for columns in New-York, here forms the material of entire and elegant blocks; and, what is of personal interest to travellers, Tremont House is unequalled as a spacious and genteel hotel in the whole Union.

The harbour makes a fine appearance from every eminence; and the surrounding country, diversified with bold and swelling hills, populous villages, and elegant country-seats, offers attractions superior to the environs of any of our other cities. Indeed, no pleasanter or more varied tour of ten or fifteen miles could be easily desired than that which may be made, by hard and level roads, round the circuit of Charles River. On the eminences, Washington formed the line of troops with which he besieged Boston in 1775. That end of the horseshoe which overlooks the city 161 from the north is surmounted by the monument of Bunker Hill; while on that which commands the harbour from the south-east, viz. Dorchester Heights, is seen the wall of a circular fort. Hereabouts were some of the earliest settlements in New-England.

In literary institutions Boston holds an elevated rank. Without speaking of the Massachusetts Historical Society, the Athenæum, &c. &c., Harvard College, which may

Library of Congress

be regarded almost as in the city itself, is the best endowed, though not now the most flourishing, institution in the Union. Why will not our wealthy countrymen in other States take fire at the noble example which has been set them by the Bostonians, in fostering learning? The public-schools are probably superior on the whole to those of New-York; and if so, of course to all others in the country. Writing, however, is not taught as easily or as well as in New-York; slates not being used for that purpose. The girls' and boys' schools, also, are separated, which must be attended with some inconveniences. The primary schools are vastly inferior, being under a distinct supervision, and controlled by a numerous and unmanageable body of men, most of whom can hardly be expected to keep pace with the improvements in that important department of public instruction. Here, therefore, you find the old-fashioned Ma'am schools—with the poor little children seated all over the room, without apparatus, exercises, singing, or any other humane and intelligent device to render instruction or school-going tolerable. In Boston, however, is enjoyed the great advantage of a comparatively homogeneous population, and a strong prejudice in favour of education. What would the trustees of the New-York Public-schools think would befall their books, if they should permit the children to take them home, as they do in Boston? Of the grammar-schools I have not leisure to speak in befitting terms of praise; nor have I room to give vent to the regret I felt at some of the evidences I met of the perverted influence of fashion in some of the female schools.

Mount Auburn has had the misfortune to be over-praised in print; and the consequence is, I believe, that every visitor 162 to it is disappointed. The spot is very pleasant; nature has given it seclusion, with pretty sights of green hills and woods, which acquired for it the name of Goldsmith's village years ago. And nearly in the state of nature it still remains: the plan for its improvement having been as yet completed only on paper. There is nothing to impress the mind as you approach it with feelings appropriate to an extensive cemetery. Walks and avenues have been planned, and little signs inform you that here among the bushes is Cypress avenue or Cedar-walk; but in many places you have nothing else to lead you to suspect where you are. The visitors who go there for a ride, and leave their

Library of Congress

carriages or horses on the borders of the grounds, often interrupt the reflections which a sober mind would wish to indulge in on such a spot. The plan is far superior to that of the New-Haven burying-ground, where, as I have remarked, there is a want of variety in surface and shrubbery, and little seclusion from observation.

The example set by Boston, in forming such a cemetery, it is to be hoped may be imitated by many villages as well as cities. It is in several respects an improvement on the ancient New-England plan, though much more accommodated to it than to that of some other parts of the country and large towns in general. In cities, public and private tombs are used, and small and crowded burying-grounds, often at an expense which would procure interment at a distance in some retired scene; but in the latter there is often less security, except strict precautions be taken. Cemeteries should be planned with reference to the living as well as the dead; and should at once be convenient and pleasant to visitors, guarded from injury and every thing like disrespect. They ought not, I think, to be placed in the centre of a village, as they generally are, nor yet too far remote from the habitations of men. If they are constantly before the eye, they are regarded with too much indifference, and the ground is often made a thoroughfare and even a place of sport by children. In some instances new and more retired situations have been chosen; for there is no objection to separating the burying-ground from the 163 church, with those who do not consecrate ground: but in how few instances is taste consulted in the selection of a spot, in laying it out, or planting it with evergreens!—

Newspapers are in some senses great pests. The old-fashioned literati complain bitterly that they occupy the places of books such as they used to read and grow wise with, and ask, What is it but newspapers which makes our young men different from what they used to be? If they would listen to one of this class, so far from perfection as I allow, I would say, it is owing to many other causes besides this. So far as newspapers have an evil influence, it is attributable to their quality, not to the fact that they are newspapers; and the evil of the bad is partly owing to our fathers' neglect in not providing good editors, nor taking timely precautions to secure a good public taste. The neglect under which

Library of Congress

newspapers so long suffered now appears to have been almost criminal: it was at least short-sighted: for if their present importance had been foreseen, and if proper measures had been taken, they would have been better, and sources of much more good and far less evil than now.

But as for getting along without them, under the present and the probable future state of things, it is out of the question. Every man, at least in this part of the country, who has any regard for his character for common intelligence, or any curiosity or taste, or who has a wife, son, or daughter possessing these qualities, must have the affairs of the county, State, Union, and universe laid before him every week at least. And this is done for from one and a half to two and a half dollars a year. Multitudes obtain with this a vast amount of matter relating to doctrinal and practical religion, the movements of the clergy of their denominations, the growth of churches, the operations of their Bible, tract, missionary, and temperance societies, &c. &c.

But to go further into particulars—the public affairs of all nations, the effects of the enterprises of distinguished individuals, the opinions of new books in both hemispheres. The people of this country exercise an habitual censorship over their fellow-men—many of them daily, multitudes of them weekly, as they seat themselves to peruse their newspapers; and feel at the same time a degree of self-respect, as well as regard for good or wise men, however distant, who seem in some sense to be labouring in their various spheres partly for their gratification or improvement. When Humboldt was scouring plains and ascending mountains, in many an humble habitation was his progress watched; and tow-wicked candles, lighted as the farmers' families assemble at evening, will show the columns which shall speak of Don Miguel's fall, and Captain Hall's adventures in his pursuit of Parry.

It is a great consolation when we see the paltry and often the vicious stuff with which many of our public papers abound, that after all so small a portion of the community read it. What is professedly political has charms for but few, if we except such things as are personal in

Library of Congress

their bearing on individuals known to the readers. Marriages and deaths induce hundreds to take them up, where tens are attracted by what is called the original articles, most of which have as much originality as an echo. The most virulent, tasteless, and sottish papers are generally those which are supported by some party, and these are often taken for appearances, and not to read.

The learned must consent to share in the burthen of the charge of the public ignorance and want of taste. They who are familiar with the state of things in Greece and Rome, and all other countries on the face of the earth, ought to have had skill to foresee that our circumstances, so different from those of any nation before us, must require a different treatment to produce any desirable effect. They are a venerable set of men, I allow—highly respectable; some of them know law, some physic, some history, Hebrew, Latin, Greek, and what not. There are those who have waded deep into the most important *branches* of knowledge (I use *branches* in the southern sense), and are actually swimming in a surfeit of science, who, I fear, have not sufficiently thought how they may convey a few drops to their thirsty fellow-citizens. Is not the idea still too prevalent, that there is no way to learning except the royal road? Is there not a tiresome long toll-bridge across that stream which separates the land of ignorance from the domain of knowledge, over which all are required to pass, while none are permitted to use the humble stepping-stones or to attempt the ford below? Cannot some means be devised by which some of the important principles, now wrapped in volumes and concealed in foreign words, may be put into the possession of those who most need them for frequent and practical use? Have the Medes and Persians any law requiring every individual who would know how many bones there are in his foot, or what fiddle-string it is that vibrates when he knocks his elbow, to go through a regular course of study at a medical college? If they have, by the way, it is violated, and will be set at nought, I trust, still more, by the Penny Magazine, Penny Gazette, *et omne id genus* of publications which have begun to appear, I had almost said, since I began to pen this page. In these things the English have set us a good example;

Library of Congress

which, as we are such “legitimates” in literary matters as to admit no improvements except through the royal road, there is now hope we shall benefit by it.

CHAPTER XXII.

Nahant—Plymouth—Principles of the Pilgrims—Their Institutions—Excuse for not knowing more—Lyceums.

Nahant is the first great fashionable retreat our coast presents, beginning to follow its devious line from the eastern part of the country. There many a citizen, many a young person educated in our fashionable schools, is for the first time introduced to the ocean, and taught, by a glance, how great are objects he knows not, how small many of the acquisitions the giddy world admires. I do firmly believe that a misguided parent, who has had the folly to bring up his child in the way he should not go; who has taught his son or his daughter to admire the false glitter of wealth, and to neglect the search after intellectual and moral enjoyments,—many such a parent, by bringing his child here, has exposed him to a scene that can counteract at once the very principles of his education, implant new ideas, lead him to think his parent superficial, and drive him to other sources of instruction. There is an appeal, a warning, a monitory voice in the sea, when its waves are dashed against the rocks, which affects the old and even the accustomed mind with awe; but to the young, the inexperienced, it addresses itself with a tone which enforces attention, and makes an impression no human power, perhaps, can ever entirely efface.

“Unfall'n, religious, holy sea!”

A scene like this is best calculated for the retreat of one who has forsaken the paths of righteousness, and wishes to retrace his steps. Vice never chooses a place where such reproaches are sounded in her ears. It is also one of the most favourable situations for implanting salutary and lasting impressions in the young. Scenes like this are, perhaps, liable to as few objections, even when strictly regarded, as any can be, for the establishment of houses of general resort: for as the objects of nature offer a good

Library of Congress

deal of attraction, even to the less estimable class of visitors, they substitute reflections harmless, if not useful, for many of the unbecoming games and occupations in which hours are usually occupied in public places. The man of business is not attracted to the billiard-table to fill up a blank left by his abstraction from his desk; but he seats himself on some of the resting-places arranged on the most advantageous points of view, and gazes in admiration on a horizon more extended, on objects more elevating than he finds elsewhere. He indulges in reflections ennobling to a mind borne down with daily cares, while he is refreshed by a pure and kindly breeze, that comes with health and rational hilarity on its wings, to repair the wastes that necessary labour has made upon his frame.

Of the sea serpent I have nothing to say.

Plymouth I visited with becoming reverence, on account of the memory of our forefathers. What a dreary scene 167 must the coast have presented to them when they landed on this spot in December, 1620! The soil is sandy, thin, and poor, and a range of low hills gives an uniformity to the shore, to which nothing but some important historical event could have given interest. Along the Atlantic coast of the United States, from hereabouts down to Florida, vast tracts of sands are found, the marks of some tremendous operation explicable only by reference to Noah's flood. Of this nature is the country here. The undulating surface of light sand, intermingled with loose primitive rocks, stretches along the bay, while it also forms Cape Cod, on which the Pilgrims first effected a landing; and Carver's Rock, on which tradition says they first stepped from their boat, is of granite. They saw none of the natives at first, because a fatal disease had destroyed all the inhabitants for some distance round several years before. Old William Wood mentions, in his *New-England's Prospect*, printed in 1634, that Ragged Plain, a little in the interior, had become covered with bushes for the want of Indians to burn it over, as they had been accustomed to do, for game.

I took my stand on the top of Burying Hill, near the grave of Carver, those of several of his associates in the first settlement of New-England, and of many of their descendants.

Library of Congress

On this spot they entrenched themselves immediately; at its base, on the south side, they formed their treaty with Massasoit; between it and the shore on the east they erected their first dwellings along the present street of the village; between the lofty bluffs on the sides of the harbour they used to watch for the expected arrival of ships from England; northwardly they soon saw new colonies established; and westward—what talents would be required to show the whole influence of their early labours and pure and wise institutions! Where we can trace the operations of their principles among our countrymen, we find that we owe to them almost every thing we are and have and hope for.

It was a simple question with them, after they had established themselves here, whether they should take this course or that—shall we observe the strict rules of morality and religion, and instruct our children in useful knowledge, or 168 not? They did not dispose of the question as the representatives of Pennsylvania did a few months since, when the bill for common schools in the state was before them. They did not decide that they were too poor to do it conveniently, and therefore must postpone it. The Pilgrims were simple enough to believe that “learning is better than house and land,” and therefore provided for the establishment of a school in every town of fifty families, and a grammar-school in every one of 100 families. Let those who think them the poorer, cast up the figures by which it may be shown, and then follow the emigrants from New-England wherever they have gone, and see how they compare with those who represent different doctrines on the intellect.

It is true that the Pilgrims enjoyed great advantages for laying the foundations of their society along with general education. They came well provided with knowledge, and had little expense to incur at the outset. Family instruction was a powerful aid to schools; and it is the want of this which renders necessary the array of means now required to make up for deficiencies where it has been neglected. Knowledge may be transmitted from generation to generation, in the same manner and almost as cheaply as ignorance; but what a difference is the consequence! Suppose that the pilgrims had chosen to neglect the means necessary to secure general instruction. Imagine the consequences. This country,

Library of Congress

instead of sending out so much of its population to all seas and regions, because they had superior intelligence, and can pursue the beasts of the forests, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, as well as commerce and various other kinds of business, with greater success than other men, would probably have been visited by those of other nations for the same purpose, and ere this have been a much more mixed people. The great streams of teachers, of all classes, which are now poured out annually to other states of the Union, would never have begun to flow—sad evidence of the literary drought which would have parched the soil, now so fertile in men of education. If the arts and sciences, public virtue and intelligence, had ever risen high enough to send out emigrants to 169 the West, they would have flowed in one undistinguished mass with those tides of emigration from other quarters, which, however strongly contrasted with them now when they meet, are soon and materially purified by the mixture. Had the Pilgrims acted like most other planters of colonies, in respect to public education merely, Bunker Hill would have had no name, and the United States no being.

There are many things to be seen in Boston, some of which I know but little about, and too many more I had not the taste, or knowledge, or sagacity to observe or take pleasure in. I am no English tourist, and therefore cannot pretend to know every thing. If I had the wonderful facilities possessed by some of those men and women who survey the United States through their blue glasses, and then write things of which none of us natives ever heard, I might have had more to say. How pleasant must travelling be to such gentry! A person with their talents might sit in his hotel, or sleep in the steamboat, and make books, whose originality at least would never be doubted: whereas such people as I can never say a thing of any place or object, without having everybody who is acquainted with it exclaim, "That's a fact;" and can never indulge in a reflection, but the first plain, merely sensible person who reads it will say, "That's true—very good—he thinks as I do."

Now this is no way to make a book, that's very certain. What gratification can it be to anybody to be told that things around him are what they know them to be; and that they and their neighbours have done exactly what they have, and can do so and so, and no

Library of Congress

more nor less? But, all! when shall we equal the English? “Rara avis in terris”—now and then we find one of these rare fowl—not so rare, however, now as they once were—some think there are quite enough of them. One of them, I recollect, was at a hotel in New-York some months ago, where he gave out that he was collecting remarks, and every day took out his memorandum-book and pencil at table. Two or three persons, who appreciated the importance of his undertaking, were so obliging as to render him assistance; and out of respect to his future readers, never allowed him to take any thing but the choicest bits from that great news-market; and, indeed, generally took the trouble to stall-feed the cattle and pigeons before they brought them up. Under their hands our steamboats, race-horses, whale-boats, and spinning-wheels improved more in speed than they had done in years before; and the march of mind in the United States was equalled only by the progress of the pumpkinvines in the meadows. Had the wonders he heard been communicated to him in a different manner, he might have questioned the statements; but they were introduced casually in common conversation; not narrated to him as prodigies, but mingled with the concerns of the day, and heard by others without surprise, and often without remark. This intelligent foreigner faithfully noted every thing, and must have taken a vast fund of available merchandise home to England. His friends grieved the less at his departure, because they cherished the hope of seeing him ere long in a book. As yet, however, they have been disappointed. Among the various travels in the United States since published in Great Britain, they have not found his name; and although several of them have borne strong marks of his character, and were to a great degree composed of materials like those which he collected, they are at once so like and unlike the valuable mass with which he was supplied, that they were inclined to suspect he had sold his notes “in lots to suit purchasers.”

It is impossible to travel far in this state, and, indeed, in some of the other states also, without perceiving signs of the recent impulses given to public instruction. In some places the old school-houses have been replaced with convenient and handsome edifices; evidently planned with some regard to their importance, the public convenience, and

Library of Congress

the principles of taste. In others large buildings have been erected for public lectures, libraries, and cabinets of natural history. And if we had time enough to inquire into the state of public intelligence, we should find considerable improvements made within the last three or four years. The associations for literary improvement, which have multiplied so rapidly, though varying in size, importance, and plan, 171 are known by the general name of lyceums, which is a word of good, sound, and classical origin; and although often applied to societies of a different and generally a loftier character, may, perhaps, as well as any other, be used in this meaning. The career of knowledge, like that of benevolence, however humble the agents embarked in it or the scale of their operation, offers innumerable and often unexpected gratifications. I have attended several meetings of such associations, and cannot easily describe all the ways or the whole extent in which I received gratification.

So many meetings have been held, so many little societies formed, and so many measures taken with direct reference to the diffusion of knowledge, that those who appreciate its value are sure of receiving support in any judicious effort they may make in its favour. Suppose a public meeting is called in the village of Newtown, to form a village lyceum. The bell is rung in the meeting-house, and probably the minister, the teachers, male and female, assemble, with many or few of the people, according to circumstances. The ladies sit at some distance, near enough to hear, yet far enough to show that modesty actuates them wherever they go. Some person, familiar with such societies, gives a statement of their plan and effects, and comments on the advantages offered by the village for the formation of a similar association. It is unanimously resolved, "That it is expedient to form a Newtown Lyceum." A committee is then appointed to form a constitution, which is perhaps presented to the same meeting, or if not, to a subsequent one. On the articles, probably, some discussion takes place; and I can answer for it that they sometimes disclose both talent and eloquence, and always some facts concerning the state of society which may prove instructive to a stranger. I have wished that some of the well-meaning travellers who have told such ridiculous tales of us on the other

Library of Congress

side of the Atlantic could have listened to a few such discussions, even in our most obscure villages; for they would have heard our plain country-people talking together about themselves, and that affords one of the best possible opportunities for learning their condition and character.

172

“I had no notice, gentlemen,” remarked a middle-aged man from another town, “that I was to address this meeting. I was passing through Newtown, and attracted here only by learning at the tavern that a lyceum was to be formed. I will mention briefly that the lyceum of Oldtown, of which I had the honour to be secretary, has been very useful, as it is generally believed, in affording harmless amusement as well as useful instruction to different classes, particularly the young. The funds are derived from the subscriptions of members, at half a dollar each, and a quarter of a dollar for minors, who however are not entitled to a vote. The officers are a president, vice-president, recording and corresponding secretary, treasurer, and librarian, who, with five others called curators, form the board of directors, three of whom make a quorum for ordinary business. We have collected a library, by loan and gift, of books which could be spared by the members of the society; and thus each volume being made accessible to all, is as it were multiplied by two hundred, which is about the number of our members. One or two lectures on different subjects are delivered every week in the winter when the weather permits, by volunteers—professional gentlemen and farmers; and occasionally we are favoured with some friend from a neighbouring lyceum, with an essay which has been well received there. We send a delegate every quarter to the county lyceum (where your delegates, I hope, will hereafter attend), and hear interesting reports from him of their proceedings on his return. Our schools have been much improved, as the teachers are interested in introducing every improvement in discipline and instruction which they can obtain; and I must do most teachers the justice to say that they are true friends of knowledge and republican institutions. And while I am on this point, allow me to remark, gentlemen, that we have it in our power, though but humble individuals, by pursuing a proper course of operations

Library of Congress

in the society which exists around us, to effect what the governments of some countries of Europe are endeavouring to do, but cannot fully accomplish, with all the means in their possession. We can raise the standard of our common schools 173 to the highest grade, and carry their benefits to every individual. A monarch can do little for this object without the general and hearty co-operation of his people; and if that can be secured by us, we need not despair for our want of any other influence. The French government, during the past year, established a splendid system of public instruction; and the semi-weekly paper and the monthly magazine, published by the minister of instruction, inform us that it expressly avows, as essential principles, that religious education is inseparable from intellectual; that the interests of the state require that every child be instructed; and that the profession of a teacher, in every department, must be rendered respectable in the eyes of the public. Through the investigations made, the best systems in Europe may now be obtained from France; and nothing remains to be done but to educate teachers enough, and to excite proper emulation among the people.

“Make the results of education, known, and you will awaken interest in schools: show parents and teachers better systems than they have, and they will wish to obtain them: raise the salaries of teachers, treat them with due respect, and you may have good ones. In many points men of their practical knowledge will easily improve by the mere exhibition of apparatus, or by witnessing the management of a model-class for a half hour. Encourage, therefore, the meetings of common school-teachers in the town and the county, for thus, still more than in the case of the library, the information of each becomes the property of all. We must remember that our schools should never be left alone by the good and the intelligent, until they shall have been placed on the best possible footing. Our teachers ought to be retained permanently in their profession, and respected as highly as any members of society. They ought also to be put in possession of every improvement for their aid which is known in the world. Our commerce with foreign nations is never made subservient to its highest objects so long as we do not by means of it promote the diffusion of useful knowledge; and intellectual must go hand in hand with religious. And

Library of Congress

mark the tendency of frequent 174 association! It is only the extension of that principle on which true friends receive mutual benefit from conversing on a topic with which they are partially acquainted. They share the whole stock with each other, and at the same time are stimulated to obtain and communicate more in future.”

By such remarks as these the individuals present feel encouraged to further the good objects by such means as are in their power. The stranger departs, but some one or more he leaves behind are prepared to act on a committee to procure lectures for the winter, or to solicit the loan of books, to visit the schools, to collect minerals, to make a map of the town, to correspond with some other society, to collect historical facts of the region in which he dwells, or to raise funds to procure a philosophical apparatus, or possibly to erect a building for the society. The meeting has convinced some individual at least that he could do more than he before believed; and more than one are now started on a career in which the example and support of others, with success in new exertions, will probably display to themselves powers of mind and means of usefulness, as well as of enjoyment, of which they have before been quite unsuspecting.

In a country like this, where such a state of society has been established, great advantages are enjoyed by parents in rearing their children. And of this many of our emigrants appear sensible; for some of them send their little ones from the South to be educated among the scenes and moral influences of their infancy. No higher expression of attachment and veneration can be paid to their native land than this, by such men as have done what they could, to improve the intelligence and morality of the regions where they dwell. Education is a staple commodity of Massachusetts and Connecticut, and more or less so of some of the other northern states. A child here is as sure of good examples, and good intellectual and moral instruction, as he would be of having rice enough in South Carolina, sugar-cane in Louisiana, or Indian corn in Ohio.

The route from Boston to New-York, through Providence, is interesting on several accounts, but is well known; and 175 besides, if I should stop to speak of it, I should not

Library of Congress

find time to complete the remaining part of my tour. It is a dreadful thing for a writer to have more materials than he can use; an evil, fortunately, not very common at the present day; for if we may judge authors by their books, they generally want nothing more than something to say. However, it is my chance this time to suffer under a surfeit.

CHAPTER XXIII.

New-York—Hotels—Sculpture—South America—Dr. Sweet—Foreign Inventions.

Nothing is more remarkable than the rapid multiplication and extension of hotels in New-York within a few years. About six or eight years ago there was none except the City Hotel, which was considered as affording very extensive, and at the same time genteel accommodations; Bunker's, Washington Hall, and Park Place House being on a less extensive scale. The American Hotel was not opened without some anticipations among idle remarkers that the city would not support it; and yet we have now the National, the Adelphi, the United States, Webb's, the Franklin, and, without mentioning many others in different streets, lastly, the moose, the mammoth, Holt's. What scenes of bustle are presented at the doors in the travelling-season, especially at the hours of steamboats arriving and departing, which now occur with but short intermissions! How roll the coaches to and from; how the porters jostle you and one another; how the strangers pour up or down the side-walks, with their great coats on their arms, or pack their wives and children hastily into coaches. How you can instantly distinguish these birds of passage as they stop at the corner before you, and survey the houses above them from top to bottom, and then gaze at the crowd rushing by them, as if hunting for a needle in a hay-mow. What a difference it must make with them in respect to the pleasure of their journey, and the information they may carry home, whether they find a bed to lodge in or not; and whether comfortable things befall them or otherwise. As we pass them in the street, it seems but a matter of little concern whether they are lodged here, or there, or nowhere; whether they are treated honestly or have their pockets picked. But it is much to them. O this familiarity

Library of Congress

with crowds and bustle, this packing down of human flesh in cities like jerked beef, makes us in some respects wonderfully selfish and indifferent to our species.

Speaking of hotels—Holt's is the mammoth of them all. Seeking a friend one day, a gentleman traced him to Holt's, inquired for him at the bar, and was told that although not in his room, he was somewhere in the house. "That was what I was afraid of," said he—"I shall never find him. If he had gone out I would have given him a fair chase through the city, with some small hope of finding him: but in such a boundless labyrinth as this I will not waste time in searching for him."

This hotel is sometimes called Holt's castle; but it is rather the castle of indolence, or more properly that of gluttony. "The refectory," "hot coffee," "the ordinary," "private dining-room," &c. &c., these are conspicuous words blazoned on the doors and along the passages. Labourers, horses and carts are often seen lining the curb-stones, toiling and groaning even in removing the refuse and fragments of those enormous feasts which are daily consumed in this surfeit factory. A steam-engine puffs and perspires all day to raise aloft tons of food, merely for hundreds of trenchermen to bring it down again; and, to judge from the smoke and hissing, one would think the inroads of hunger were more difficult to resist, than the current of the Hudson or the Mississippi.

This pile of granite is in one sense a temple of "Taste;"—and what species of taste that is, the spectator may judge from any commanding view within some miles, by the broad banner that floats on its top, bearing an enormous green 177 turtle! The sight of such an ensign is not a very gratifying one to a man of letters, unless indeed he be suffering under a paroxysm of hunger, to which his tribe are said to be rather predisposed. Under other circumstances, he exclaims, O that my countrymen would content themselves with moderation in their animal enjoyments, and sacrifice more to the mind! If this bar were converted into a library; if tomes of knowledge were put in the place of bottles and decanters, and the halls were furnished with food for the intellect, what a splendid university would this be!

Library of Congress

I have been visiting some of the artists and exhibition rooms; and having already indulged in a few remarks on paintings and painters, I might apply some of the same views to sculpture; but shall not stop here to be very particular. I would briefly remark, that taste or genius, as it is called in sculpture, need not be of so gradual growth in our country as many persons think. Many of our travellers abroad will tell you, that an hour spent in the museum of Florence, or in the select society of Apollo and Co., in the palace of the Vatican, would be sufficient to convert the most rude taste to something very refined and intelligent; and as for genius, did not Canova grow up in a few years; and was not his life more than long enough to revolutionize the world of artists? Even in the most refined countries, every new generation must be educated to refinement. We have, therefore, only to use the proper means, and in a very short time might have taste and genius, and the results of both combined.

It is a slavish doctrine too, that no artist can be worthy of respect who has not worked in Rome. Let not our youth be discouraged. Take a chisel, look at a man, and make the rock look as much like him as you can. But the rock is hard. Then take plaster, or common red clay from a brick-yard. It will wash off from the hands of genius—Canova used it often. Set about gravely to do what you have attempted when a boy with the snow. Try to make a man—it is not so puerile a business, neither is it so very difficult. You are not to be perplexed with colours, lights and shades, or in any way required to make a flat surface look like what it is not. You may measure every part, turn it this way and that by moving the block on which it stands, and alter, remould, and begin again. Nothing is spent but a little leisure time, a little attention and ingenuity, for which you will be more attentive and ingenious hereafter, and a better judge of other people's work. The clay is as good as it was before, and you are not obliged to show your work or to try again. You are already like an artist in one respect; you have failed in your first attempt to do as well as you wished. Even if you had tried to chisel a stone and broken it, your tool, or your skin, I dare say Canova and Thorwaldson themselves have done worse.

Library of Congress

There have been fewer good sculptors than good painters; but sculpture is a much more natural and simple art than painting. It has its peculiar principles, and in certain details there are more niceties; but in general this is not the case. For example—there must be caution used to guard against any unmeaning, incorrect, or ridiculous effect in every point of view from which a statue or group is to be seen: while a picture has but one side. But how natural is the attempt to mould a material mass into the form of humanity; and how much better do even children succeed in making images of snow than in drawing men with coal or chalk! And how much more readily do the uninstructed express their opinions of statues than of paintings, because they feel better competent to judge! I need but remark in addition, how Mr. Augur has astonished us all with his “Jephtha and his daughter,” because he had independence enough to act on these principles, and with extraordinary taste and perseverance. (How strangely I forgot to speak of Augur with praise while at New-Haven!) And how has the Scotch stone-cutter, Thom, with the coarsest stone, and in spite of his degraded subject, viz. a low ale-house group, imitated nature almost to perfection, without the benefit of instruction or a single model.

I have said a good deal about taste, perhaps, to very little purpose, yet I must express my displeasure for that shown by many of my countrymen in several recent instances. While works of real merit, recommended by patriotic, or at 179 least respectable historical associations are offered for exhibition almost in vain; while artists of extraordinary talent, pure character, and commendable intentions are shut up in humble corners by public neglect, we can rush in crowds to see a poor and meager composition, whose merits are merely of an inferior order, and whose tendency is of a decidedly corrupting character. I speak of the “great *immoral* painting” of Adam and Eve in Paradise. This picture has indeed a scripture subject, but that is its only merit, except the mere mechanical execution of the figures. The composition has not the essential quality of a just conception of the scene portrayed. There is no Eden, unless a few flowers on a green bank may express it; and no one could ever judge of the artist's intention or his subject, if the serpent and the apple were withdrawn. On the contrary, every thing else, except the nudity of the

Library of Congress

personages, would lead to a very opposite idea. And as to the intellectual character of the piece, how mean, as well as how detestable, appears the character of the mind expressed in this painting! Such an artist would make the Eden of purity a mere Mohammedan paradise. Nature is represented as destitute of beauty; and man, in his state of perfection, as devoid of every exalted and ennobling sentiment. From woman, every intellectual trait seems to be removed; and how insufferable is this, in such a scene, where the acquisition of knowledge was the great instrument of temptation,—the object to which she had yielded, and which she used as the ground of her argument with Adam!

For my own part, this miserable failure of a foreign artist will ever be doubly displeasing to me, because it has been so extensively rendered popular by the notice of men who, in my opinion, ought to have possessed more taste and discernment.

Because it was a scripture painting, fathers and mothers, laymen and clergymen, crowded to see it, indifferent or unsuspecting with regard to the impression which their example would have on virtuous and blushing youth, and on immoral and debased members of society, who rejoice when evil sentiments are allowed to walk in the sunshine.

180

Encouraged, I suppose, by the golden success of the proprietor of this painting, Hughes, a man of extraordinary talent as a sculptor, has produced a far more decent, yet a mean subject, which addresses itself to a somewhat similar taste. His skill ought to be bestowed in a more worthy manner before it receives general applause. The arts are infernal demons when allied with immorality or even with debased sentiments.

While we are crowding to Europe, or sending our children thither, to run through the great travelled routes, to see sights and learn to talk of things because they have been visited and talked of before, but generally with very little conception of why or wherefore, our country is an object of well-defined interest to many intelligent foreigners. I have fallen in with several gentlemen of education from South America, who are looking upon our

Library of Congress

society with particular curiosity. Our southern brethren, in their zeal to learn the art of conducting a country upon our principles, chide our indifference; and in the preference many of them show for subjects substantially important, might make us ashamed of our blind admiration for the splendid tinsel of Europe. While we are reading of feudal castles, or recalling with misplaced enthusiasm our visits to foreign capitals or courts, they are asking admission into our printing-offices, or observing the apparatus and exercises of our colleges and schools. They are attracted by these things, because they are in search of means to effect a definite object, and one on which the prosperity and indeed the existence of their country depends. The apparatus with which the governments of European countries are carried on is too expensive for them—it is entirely out of the question, both because it is too dear and because it is not at all appropriate to their condition or designs. In looking over the Old World, therefore, they see, as we ought, that there is nothing appropriate to their use except certain scattered institutions, or methods here and there, and these generally not the gaudy machinery, sustained with treasures, exhibited with pomp, and disguised with forms. What is worth knowing in Europe is generally that which it is not difficult to learn: 181 what we should look upon, few eyes are likely to discover. The South Americans have contested the point for liberty and independence for twenty years or more with prejudice, ignorance, and immorality; and many of their statesmen, as well as other virtuous citizens, have been forced to the conviction that they must by some means instruct their countrymen and render them virtuous, or their past labours and trials will be unavailing. Let Europe be at peace, and permit only the concurrence of such circumstances as may be imagined, and fleets and armies will cross the Atlantic to recover those immeasurable and splendid regions to the dominion of despotism. Men who have sacrificed fortune, endured wounds, imprisonment, and exile, the loss of friends and families for the benefit of their country, are ready to part with all that remains rather than be ultimately defeated of their objects. When therefore they see by that means so simple and economical as the propagation of knowledge, the encouragement of virtue and industry, their point may be gained, they look upon the steps by which this may be effected with an interest which might excite some of our talking but

Library of Congress

inactive friends of education and public industry, and arouse them from that lethargy which so extensively prevails in the United States.

Some of these South Americans having visited several of our institutions, celebrations, public, and Sunday-schools: "To think," remarked one of them, "that one-third of the capital of my country is invested in the convents! How much more truly great are such monuments as your public school-houses than any of the edifices of Europe!" While seated in the teacher's desk, after a silence, he exclaimed; "If I could learn the art of instruction here, I should desire no higher honour than to devote the remainder of my days to teaching the poor." This gentleman has since been called to the presidency of Mexico by acclamation, restored peace in the midst of civil war, held that office for a few months, and retired to private life.

"What have we here?" said another, as he entered an infant-school, while the pupils were marching to drafts—"a military parade commanded by women? This is the way 16* 182 to lay the foundation of a good state. I have no higher pleasure," he added, "than to visit your schools and colleges." He is now displaying at home his devotion to learning in all its branches, under the most favourable circumstances, viz. as president of the republic of New Grenada.

One of his most enlightened countrymen and personal friends, in his first visit to a Sabbath-school, found the infant class singing a well-known juvenile hymn; and as he understood the English language, said, with much feeling, "Truly the children of the United States are taught to repeat sentiments before they can understand them, while other nations might well make any sacrifice if they might with truth apply them to themselves:—

'My God, I thank thee, thou hast plann'd A better lot for me; And plac'd me in this Christian land, Where I may hear of Thee.'

"I am fully convinced," said he, "that sincere, active benevolence alone is true greatness. Serving God, loving all mankind as brothers, and teaching them to exercise the same

Library of Congress

feelings towards each other—these are the only objects worth living for. The principles of the Gospel of Jesus Christ are the only principles on which we can depend for private or public happiness. Honour, pride, and power—they are trifles, mere trifles.” The sweet harmony of about an hundred and fifty children at an infant-school one day made his eyes glisten; and he remarked, “How affecting it is to reflect, that ‘Except ye repent, and become as little children, ye shall in no case enter the kingdom of heaven.’” This gentleman, the father of an interesting little family, six or seven hundred miles in the interior of Colombia, of which republic he was the last president, returned thither about a twelvemonth since, prepared to devote himself to the active promotion of education in all its branches, among all classes, the Indians and negroes included; but has been elected to the vice-presidency of New Grenada, and compelled to accept of that station, in spite of two refusals.

183

These few cases have been mentioned to show that our countrymen have been too long inattentive to the progress of our South American brethren in improvements of various kinds; and to call to mind the important fact, that similarity of institutions and condition are rapidly identifying the interests, the hopes and fears of these two vast portions of the New World; and it is daily becoming more imperiously our duty to seek to strengthen rather than to divide our mutual attachments, which, like the Isthmus of Darien, though narrow, should be as indestructible as the Andes. Other devoted friends of knowledge and virtue, our enthusiastic admirers and willing pupils, might easily be mentioned; but Pedraza, Santander, and Mosquera are given as examples in which noble sentiments expressed among us, and intelligent observations made in our country, have been made to produce speedy and abundant fruits in the vast regions to which they have returned.

It is all in vain for foreign artists or inventors to expect to keep from our countrymen the curious and useful improvements in any of the arts they practise with success. There is a prying spirit among us, which will not rest till it possesses every thing that promises advantage. Men will go to the ends of the earth for facts which may lighten,

Library of Congress

facilitate, or perfect their labours in whatever craft they feel interested, since competition in manufacturing has made knowledge and skill available in the market.

All the encomiums that can be bestowed, however, on American curiosity and perseverance, could not give me the same lively impressions of its nature as a short conversation I heard between a poor man and a shopkeeper, with whom he was bartering some neat products of his skill.

“Did you ever see any of Reeves's Patent Water Colours? If you did, I suppose you don't know exactly how they are made. Now these are as much Reeves's Colours as them you've got in your case yonder, though I made them yesterday myself. You don't believe that, I s'pose; but I've worked for Reeves in London: I couldn't find out in this country how to make such fine paints; and went to England a-purpose to *larn*. I didn't see why I shouldn't help him supply this country, the demand has got to be so great now. Well, they let me go into the shop—they thought I didn't know nothing, and perhaps I didn't such a terrible deal. However, I know'd so much as this—I got so pretty soon that I could make the patent colours as well as anybody. But I wasn't quite ready to come off yet, mind you. There was the camel's hair-pencils; nobody knew how to make them in the United States—and I thought I might as well *larn* that *tue* while my hand was in. Well, I left Mr. Reeves's, and got in a pencil-shop; and the first thing I found out was, that they are made of nothing in the world but squirrels' tails.”

Here was an exclamation of surprise and doubt.

“If they an't,” continued the narrator, perfectly unabashed, “I hope I may never stir out of my tracks. I tell you they're squirrels' tails, brought from America; and if they can manufacture them cheap, *sartingly* we ought to undersell 'em. But then there's the putting the hairs together all exactly right, and getting them through the little end of a chicken's quill, and there gluing them fast. That's the rub—not exactly that either—but there's the

Library of Congress

sticking-place. I guess I worked long enough at that to find out how it was done, and then had to be told and look too before I could larn; and law, it's easy enough."

"Well, how is it?"

"Ah!" replied the artisan, with a shrewd, penetrating, and ironical look—"that's tellin'."

185

CHAPTER XXIV.

A new Corner of the World—Recollections of the Cholera.

Among the interesting individuals I saw in New-York, was a tall man, of the negro race, who was brought to this country more than two years since, by Captain James Morrell, from a group of islands which he discovered in the Pacific Ocean, during a voyage he made to those seas. The public have had before them for a year his large volume, detailing his voyages, travels, and adventures, and briefly touching upon those islands and certain others, of which he claims to be the discoverer. Two men were brought home by Captain Morrell; one of whom died some months since of the consumption, in the New-York Hospital. He was of a different language from the survivor, and very passionate and disobliging, never accommodating himself to his exile. Both had previously been exhibited in some of our principal cities, and have been often erroneously supposed to be natives of the Massacre Islands, at which Captain Morrell lost many of his crew by the violence of the inhabitants.

Having formed a favourable opinion of the captain from what I had heard from one of his seamen, of his humanity towards these poor savages; and being pleased with the intelligence, modesty, and philanthropic sentiments I discovered in him after a slight acquaintance, I took an opportunity to spend some time with the man above mentioned, who lives in his family. He is of coarse features, almost perfectly African, with large, thick lips, curled hair, small nose (a little flattened), but is well formed, excepting a slight

Library of Congress

stoop at the shoulders. His colour is that of a dark mulatto, and his countenance has an expression of honesty, mingled on acquaintance with mildness, benevolence, intelligence, and friendliness, which render it interesting. He has had 186 but little instruction; but from this circumstance I was the better able to form an opinion of the mind of a heathen and a barbarian. I have leisure at present to say but very little in regard to a man of whom, during repeated interviews, I obtained materials enough to entertain a lover of novelties for some hours.

Daco (pronounced Dahco) was son of a chief of his native island, which is one of a small, but populous group, within six degrees of the equator, and near longitude 115 west. His native island, Uniapa (or Ooneeahpah), has three prominent mountains, with some rough ground near the sea, where was Daco's residence, among a number of people whom he commanded. His father's people dwelt on the side of one of the mountains, his mother's in another place, &c. &c., there being a number of petty princes on each of the inhabited islands. War, he represents, is never carried on between different islands, but only between tribes of the same island; and then wounds are much more frequent than deaths. The land is chiefly covered with forests; and he gave me names for fifty or sixty of our trees, shrubs, flowers, &c., some of which we have no purely English names for. The men go without any clothes at all: the women wear a single garment: the climate being extremely hot. They build houses after a model which I have; bury their dead in them; purchase wives with several articles which pass as money; practise polygamy; and some superstitious ceremonies to cure diseases, obtain favourable winds, rain, &c., but have no idolatry. They acknowledge one Supreme Being, the creator, rewarder of the good and punisher of the bad, invisible, &c. They have traces of a revelation, considering a particular Jewish rite which they practice as commanded by God to make men better; and their art of curing diseases and producing rain is also derived from him. Pango is the only inferior deity he informed me of. He presides over an inferior world, where every thing is delightful, and whither the good go after death. They are, however, invisible to each other, and can communicate only by the sounds of their voices. There is plenty of plants, flowers,

Library of Congress

animals, and objects agreeable to the sight: 187 but they are all white. The entrance to this world is through a cavern in the island of Garubi (Garroobee), inhabited only by two men, who, according to his description, may be Albinos.

The inhabitants of that world are often spoken of as *tune púroco*, white men; because white is nearest to what is invisible. Hence, when Captain Morrell and the crew of his schooner, the Antarctic, were found to be white, they were supposed to be spirits. That invisible world is the land of music: Pango having given the people of the islands five or six musical instruments, one of which is the three-holed flute, and another the shepherd's reed. The resemblance of his name with that of the Classical Pan, struck me; as did the similarity of some of his words with those of the Greek and Hebrew languages, as well as certain peculiarities in the tongue not to be expected in one belonging to such a people.

They cultivate a species of potato, beans, and several other roots and vegetables; and have apples, cocoanuts, and other valuable fruits. Their birds are numerous, and often of brilliant plumage; they have turtles, and catch many fish of different sizes, with either spears, or what our fishermen call grains. The largest animal is something like the wild boar, which has not the tail on the back like the native swine of other Pacific islands, and is hunted with spears. In one of the islands are ostriches, whose quills are one of their articles of trade: dogs are common. Their canoes, which are owned only by certain littoral tribes, are large, and move with rapidity. One of the islands at least must be volcanic; and from one of the historical tales I heard, I presume that a tremendous explosion and combustion, which once destroyed a town and many of its inhabitants (at the command of Pango, who sometimes is a most destructive demon), were volcanic. The songs of this people are remarkable, as well as their propensity to rude poetry or rhythm. They have various airs, generally of a plaintive cast, but with greater compass and variety, I think, than are found in most other savage nations. The language 188 is smooth and melodious, having no sound which we cannot easily make, unless it be an occasional guttural g. They interchange some of the consonant sounds, but generally not the same as the Sandwich and other islanders, whose languages I have examined. The tongue has a considerable

Library of Congress

resemblance to those of some of the Polynesian Islands in structure, and a distant one in words; but it is more agreeable, harmonious, and manly. A. "nursery song," beginning *Eoa, eao, labi labi vivi na potu*, &c., has a very sweet air, and contains several kind epithets addressed to the child, promising that its head shall be ornamented with a feather of the *labi* or parrot if it will cease crying. A swimming song and a canoe song, which also I wrote down, are mellifluous and appropriate to their subjects.

Daco has a disposition of the most frank, simple, and amiable description. He admires much what he sees, and says that there are many very good men among us; and though he is impatient to revisit his own land, says he will "come back to ' *Merriky Isle* " (America island), and bring one of his brothers with him. He was pleased with a proposition to teach his people what would be useful to them; and if instructed, or accompanied by some judicious philanthropist on his return, would no doubt render them material service. I visited a school with him, and he took a deep interest in some simple religious instruction which the children received in his presence, as he has a little knowledge of our language. He promised on his arrival at his island to collect the children every Sabbath, and teach them in like manner.

It strikes a person strangely to feel such a kind of friendship towards an ignorant savage as I acquired for Daco; but one's attachment for such an individual may be as sincere, and productive of more real gratification, than we sometimes find among the children of art, the sons of luxury and vice around us; and I have the pleasure of thinking that my feelings were reciprocated, which is more gratifying than a whole volume of false professions of friendship.

Some parts of the city awakened in me recollections of 189 the season of 1832, and the cholera in New-York. I spent several weeks there at that time, and may be excused for expressing a few of the feelings then excited.

Library of Congress

For myself, I had found it difficult to realize, that the busy and apparently gay crowds in the streets might be sobered and saddened in an hour by the appearance of the disease, and scattered towards all points of the compass by its ravages. Indeed, I had found it hard to persuade myself that I was soon to know it by dreadful experience or observation. And when it was confidently reported to have appeared, I flattered myself that it would have been modified by the climate; and anxiously inquired whether it had that dreadful blue complexion, those irresistible spasms and racking pains, accompanied with an undisturbed mind. And when I found that the same monster was among us, which I had so long regarded as fabulous in India, and that he had come as it were with a stride across the Atlantic, I began to look within: for he had seemed to cry, "To the ready and the unprepared I come."

There was a peculiar seriousness immediately perceptible on the face of society. The gay and lively had generally disappeared, and no longer interrupted such thoughts as abundant leisure inclined others to entertain. And what thoughts were these? We were soon deserted by most of our friends, or had deserted them for the same reason: we had momentary expectations for weeks of seeing our own children, parents, brothers, and sisters seized with the terrible disease before our eyes; and the morning, evening, noon, and night air being almost equally dangerous, we could do little out of doors for days in succession. I cannot easily imagine a case in which the body could be condemned to more perfect idleness, while there was every thing to excite and occupy the mind. Almost every species of food, commonly considered harmless or nutritious, was prohibited; and the very medicines which we kept by our bedsides, in our offices, stores, and pockets, we were peremptorily forbidden to take or administer a moment before or a moment after the appropriate time. In circumstances like these it would be impossible for any mind, observant 17 190 of its own reflections, and the movements of others, not to receive instruction. Not only my own feelings, but the expressions dropped from the lips of others, were of a much more solemn tone, and deeper import than usual. I found an involuntary "farewell" on my tongue whenever I parted from a friend, even for a few hours, and a

Library of Congress

kind of surprise at meeting any one whom I had not seen for a day or two. Life was so precarious that it was not calculated on as enduring; and I now felt something of that astonishment at death's delay which I had often experienced on his arrival. The tone of conversation, with whomsoever I spoke, was evidently very different from that of ordinary times: for there were strong and irrepressible feelings in every breast, which laid their hands upon the tongue, the limbs, and the features. The soul seemed to press to the eyes with such anxiety to watch the exterior world, that you could see it plainer than ever before. The risible muscles seemed palsied; and those which are usually ready to furl the curtains of the countenance in smiles, no longer obeyed, or rather were no longer ordered to act.

A friend, in speaking of the idle questions of certain thoughtless persons from a distant place, on this awful subject, said, "When they exclaimed 'how can you submit to such privations of food?' I felt like weeping at the memory of the solemn lessons which had placed us above such frivolous considerations as those of taste. Ah, you know not what you can do till the cholera comes among you. 'Did you not prohibit the subject from conversation?' inquired they. 'How would that have been possible?' replied I: 'besides, how heathenish, how impious it would have been, so to close our eyes against the sight of the Almighty's judgments&so to stifle the voice of Providence?'"

"I have made one discovery," remarked another friend, "which I intend to practise the rest of my life. I find I can not only live on very simple food, entirely undisguised by spices and gravies, but that two-thirds or one-half the quantity I used to consider necessary for my sustenance is more favourable to my health and enjoyment. How important a practical lesson is this which the cholera has taught me! Had 191 I learned and practised upon it from my youth, I might have been a more happy, wealthy, and useful man. I wish I could proclaim, on the house-tops, the doctrine I now embrace; it would save thousands from disease, poverty, suffering, and even death."

It was only because the warnings of physicians against our eating prohibited articles was repeatedly and terribly backed by the sudden voice of death, that we were won over

Library of Congress

to entire obedience to their commands, at first often treated as childish. Some slight indulgence of appetite was often found, like the feeble wire pointed at a thunder cloud, the cause of an instantaneous and deadly bolt from heaven. We then found that we dearly loved life: and "What shall we eat, and what shall we drink?" was changed for "What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" The effect of abstinence was soon perceptible in the mind as well as the body. The pulse was cooler, the feelings more manageable though more powerfully acted upon, the reason more undisturbed, and the judgment more deliberate, decided, and uniform. Morning, noon, and midnight this world and the next stood before the eyes in the same proximity and comparative importance. Joy and grief sat, as it were, for weeks within the reach of our hands, on the right and the left: equally prepared to join our company at a moment's warning, whenever death or life should be decided on for ourselves or our friends.

The weather was delightful during the most fearful ravages of the disease. I walked out early on the Battery, alone & there was no walking or doing any thing else for pleasure. I admired the thick and verdant foliage; and turned for home with the reflection that so splendid a morning and such verdure I had seldom or never witnessed. The long, silent, and empty streets, with the grass starting through the pavements, and the curb-stones white with a washing of lime, presented a sad picture of solitude; and a litter, hurrying to the nearest hospital, showed that amid these signs of desertion, the awful cholera was at work. That day's report was the heaviest of the season.

192

CHAPTER XXV.

Fashionable Education & Hudson River & The Power of Fancy & Catskill Mountains & Thunderstorms & Rainbows & Morning Scene.

I am a traveller, periodically, like all my countrymen; and deserve the name, in common with almost all my fellow-citizens, of belonging to the greatest travelling nation in the world.

Library of Congress

Of course, on stepping into one of our steamboats, I ought reasonably to feel a personal interest in the question, so important, though so seldom answered: "What do we travel for?" I am ready to confess that I have changed my own views of this subject several times in the course of my life. I began my travels with an idea that it was an important object to become familiar with the great cities and edifices of Europe; the scenes of great events, and the peculiarities as well as characters of distinguished men. Such, I dare say, is the impression with which one of my fellow-travellers, on my right, lately set out on a tour to Europe; but I find that while he familiarly describes various localities and personages abroad, he despises every object around him. Hence I presume he regards all on this side of the Atlantic as I once did, as beneath his attention. To attempt his correction or cure I shall not: for I have once had that foreign disease, and know how alone it is ever removed. Let him attempt to use his knowledge; let him try to apply his facts to things; and he will find by degrees that they will not meet. The misdirection which he has received from his tutors and from his books, if they are to be corrected at all, can be corrected only by experience.

Happily, better opinions have come into use within a few years on subjects of this nature. Our scenery, history, and biography attract much more attention than they once did. 193 A fashionable mother near me has supplied herself with a map of the North River, to trace out some of the finest country-seats upon the banks; and yonder is a youth in humble life, who is deeply absorbed in reading of the events which occurred here during the Revolution. Indeed, I have often been forced to confess that there is more sound taste and judgment displayed, even on literary matters, by the humble, than by the lofty in society. But there are certainly some points in which we might pursue a different course with reason and advantage. Here is a wealthy merchant, who, though he owes his fortune to the habits of industry and economy he learned in a little country town, and the intelligence which he caught by contagion in a society where it prevailed, has trained up his sons to habits of extravagance and idleness, which have already begun to undermine it. A disrelish for every rational employment, and the restraints they have found in decent

Library of Congress

society, have now caused their separation from the family & family *circle* I cannot call it; for fashion draws up her votaries in a half-moon, with all faces gazing on the wonder of the day, be it what it will. The daughters & with heads garnished without, and empty as the gourd-shells their father used to drink out of—what will be left of you after the thunder-storm of death shall have cleared away, which must in his turn strike the main pillar of your house! Heartless, headless, and helpless by education! Fashion has not only trained your feet in Chinese shoes, and blown through your brains like a bird's egg, but has taught you crooked paths, and poured poison into your hearts. O for a cup-full of that good counsel which your grandmother used to pour out like water; O the influence of her example upon you for an hour! Would there not be some little hope of your breaking through the great system of imposture which all things seem combining to play before your eyes!

A youth from Scotland, on board, is hastening northward, the sooner to turn westward, and to feast his taste at Niagara. Fancies concerning the giant of cataracts he has indulged in among his native hills; and the secret of his curiosity, as I believe is often the case, appears to be to 17* 194 compare the reality with the creation of his imagination. I am prepared to find him at first disappointed, and afterward more than gratified: for I doubt not he has heaved Ossa on Pelion to make the cataract rush from between two mountains, as that is the way cascades do in Scotland; and it would be natural for a stranger to look for striking features in the scenery of the tremendous verge. Thus he will be disappointed, if not disaffected, by the first view. The imagination is a most wonderful architect. I remember that the cathedrals of France, when I visited them in my outh, appeared much too small: and when I stepped out of St. Peter's, and looked at the blue sky, I thought —“Paltry little insect! Poor man, is this then all you can do?” A heathen writer says, that the nature of the gods was lamentably degraded by the sculptors of Greece, because the representations they gave of them in marble were much less ethereal and pure than the conceptions of the common people, and declares that the mind of an uneducated man, if left to form its own views, would have created far superior characters. This is a fine, and I doubt not to a degree a just compliment to the powers of the imagination. We might find

Library of Congress

evidence of its skill within us daily, if we took the same pleasure in studying its capacities and condition as we do those of our pockets.

Scotland and the Scotch have much to interest Americans. To say nothing of our obligations to them for poetry and prose, we owe them for the testimony they have borne to the worth of knowledge and virtue. Wherever we find a Scotchman, we find a man trained to principles of probity, industry, and economy, which would enrich any land on earth, and with a respect for knowledge which would exalt it. I speak here in general terms, without regard to individual exceptions.

The banks of the Hudson are much more delightful than is commonly supposed, even by those who feel familiar with the scenery of that beautiful stream. I had been a frequent passenger in the steamboats between the city and Albany, from the early days of steamboat travelling, before I was induced to explore the banks, as I have since done at Catskill Mountains, from Saugertics

195 many intermediate points. While on my annual tour, I therefore feel desirous of informing others who may this season purpose to pass along this route, that by allowing themselves a little more time, they may greatly enhance the enjoyment and advantages of travelling.

Much of the course of the Hudson certainly offers beautiful or striking scenes to the eye of every passenger. But it is to be remarked, that the breadth of the stream necessarily tames many features, and shades or excludes many glimpses of grandeur and beauty which are fully disclosed only on a nearer view. The picturesque and varied features of the eastern shore of Haverstraw Bay, seen from the large steamboats, which slide along under the western banks, afford a striking case of this kind. There the traveller may find a delightful retreat for a few days or even weeks, if he have so much time at his disposal, and enjoy extensive and varying views upon the broad expanse of water, from elevations of two or three hundred feet.

Library of Congress

I always count more on a person who has visited such a place as Catskill Mountains by design, than on a common every-day traveller. Unless his ascent to that noble eminence has been the effect of an accidental attachment to a party bound thither, or to the mere dictation of some acquaintance, who has been obliging enough to save the lazy fellow the trouble of determining beforehand where he will go, we have reason to presume that he has been attracted by the love of what is truly fine. It is humiliating to the conceited and the proud, to the worldly wise and to the eminent&money, to contemplate scenes which pronounce a kind of anathema upon the common objects of devotion. If I were rich and purse-proud, or the occupant of any office or station obtained by chicanery or flattery, certain I am I would as willingly have my character sifted by a jury of twelve freeholders, as stand and think of my motives and myself in the presence of such a scene.

The rigorous climate of the Mountain House has been often blamed for forbidding the approach of the gay and affluent, who form such a figure in the annual crowds of travellers. But if the scene were as flattering to persons 196 of that description as their mirrors and their dependants, the Pine Orchard would be as much resorted to as Saratoga itself.

Soon after my arrival, while I stood on the projecting shelf of rock, which actually overhangs for some distance the precipice just in front of the hotel, and commands the valley of the Hudson for sixty or seventy miles, with the uplands beyond, and several summits in Connecticut and Massachusetts, admiring the serenity of the sky, I observed a cloud, shaped like a mushroom, and like it white as snow above and dark below, moving slowly down from the upper part of the river's course. None other was in sight, and this was at least a thousand feet below me. I soon perceived that it was charged with lightning, and pouring down a plentiful shower. Like a vast watering-pot it drenched the acres, the miles over which it passed; and with a glass I could imagine some of the feelings of the inhabitants of the farm-houses and villages over which it successively moved, as they were involved in its shadow, awed by its thunder, and in turn restored to the light

Library of Congress

of the sun. The habitations of men appear from that eminence like the shells and coats of insects; and it costs an exertion to realize that human interests can be of importance enough to claim serious attention to those things on which wealth or subsistence depends. Man has become a microscopic object; and how paltry seems the least diminutive of his race! And the importance of a claim to this or that speck of earth or water called a home-lot or a fishing privilege, appears consummately ridiculous. Poor creatures, why not learn to be content with what is necessary, assist those who are in want, and turn to subjects worthy of attention and love? But it is the vice of the insect that he prefers the ground, and refuses to spread the wings with which he might fly to a loftier and purer region. “De gustibus non disputandum,” said the aeronaut, whose pig squealed as he rose in the air, and tried to nose his way through the bottom of his parachute.

The singular cloud pursued its way slowly down over a space, I presume, of twenty miles, deluging the country, as 197 I afterward learned. Where all the water came from I could not imagine; neither could I see whence came all the clouds which afterward overspread the valley of the Hudson. During a thunder-storm, which threw its lightning and uttered its thunders over a great space beneath us, we enjoyed almost uninterrupted sunshine. At length a commotion began among the clouds in the south, where a cluster of small and rounded eminences, like the hills of an old cornfield, showed the Highlands (now robbed of their sublimity); and a wind blowing through that pass, rolled up the vapours in heaps, like snowballs, increasing as they proceeded, till they were all flying northward, as if in haste to escape from view. Their forms and agitation reminded me of the consternation of a panic-struck army: and a few small clouds came pouring over the heights above our heads, and mingling with them, like timid confederates afraid to await the wrath of some unseen conqueror. Almost all this time, two rainbows of the brightest colours stood just before us, with their feet planted upon the green foliage, fifty yards or more below the precipice, forming arches which approached three-quarters of a circle, with the most splendid colours imaginable, especially about the key-stone. The glittering aspect which the landscape afterward assumed, with the motions of the sails on the river, the singing

Library of Congress

of the birds around us, and the colours of the sky in a beautiful sunset, left the heart and mind in a lofty tone to await the solemnities of night.

After a period of calmness all around, when the air had been undisturbed for about two hours, lightning began to flash, and thunder to roll beneath us; and during several hours, the whole valley seemed overflowing with the sounds of battle. The evening passed amid the comforts and light of the great parlour, in a social circle, now enlarged by the addition of several friends unexpectedly found in that aerial retreat.

A few glimpses at the moon and the landscape, after midnight, from the window of my bedroom, occupied my frequent waking moments; and as soon as I could perceive the first blush of dawn, I dressed, and hastened to the roof of the hotel, to watch the approach of day, to a scene whose whiteness made me suppose it had been covered with snow. There was more sublimity to be feasted upon every moment that passed, than some people witness in their whole lives. What a grovelling soul that must be which prefers a morning slumber to such a sight! When the spirit of a man is once roused, his senses oppose no resistance to his will. Let a spark of glory, from such a scene, once kindle his heart; and sight, hearing—his whole animal nature—are roused and ready to do their parts. Let the master but appear, and the slaves will obey.

The fresh and unbreathed morning air, the glowing east, the boundless scene, made me feel as if released for ever from weariness and care. As the light increased in the sky to a broad glow, it gave something of its hue and brilliancy to a sheet of whiteness which overspread the whole valley of the Hudson, for not less than twelve or fifteen miles in width and thirty or more in length. How so heavy a snow-storm could have prevailed there in summer, I could not divine; but every hill and wood was covered, and nothing could be discovered below the higher uplands except the course of the river, like a dark line traversing the scene from north to south. A bright red glare at length lay across the whole vale between me and the sun; which, when he rose, was increased almost to the glitter of polished metal. The beams struck upon the neighbouring heights, and the few remaining

Library of Congress

trees of the ancient pine orchard near me, which once stood in rows, as if planted by the hand of man. The birds chirped, and the cocks began to crow at the base of the mountain; and peak after peak grew bright, till it became broad day to the whole world around.

I was now surprised to see something like a white sheet lifted gradually up from the opposite bank of the Hudson, showing a few fields, houses, roads, and wood-lots beneath it; and gradually mile after mile was thus slowly laid bare by the removal of a thin covering of dense white mist, which was slowly rolled off clean by the south wind, and revealed to my eye many of the hills and valleys, the farms and villages, the meadows and slopes of three counties, the abode of some thousands of inhabitants.

199

All these sights, and more, were offered to my view, and all their indescribable impressions to my mind, in the short space of twenty hours, which limited my visit. A ride of two miles took us to the lakes and the cascades, and gave us a sight down the Clove,—a deep and declining mountain-pass through which the stream that flowed beside us pursues its headlong way, after its two leaps of 175 and 85 feet.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Method and Effects of labour-saving in teaching Latin—A Frontiersman—Early History—Conversations on Health and Dress.

What were the real, bona fide effects of my grammar-school education? What were the results of my study of Virgil! to confine the question to one point. Truly, truly, it is difficult to answer. To what extent my mind was increased in vigour or capacity by it, I cannot tell: perhaps as much as might be wished—for a giant is not sensible of his own growth. I am sure, however, that I was often filled with disgust at a language which I ought to have been made to love; viewed with jealousy and resentment my teacher and fellow-students; had paroxysms of misanthropy and of disgust towards learning; and formed many erroneous

Library of Congress

opinions about the objects and enjoyments of life; and often vacillated widely in my views of virtue and vice.

Some very painful retrospects have often occupied my mind since I spent an hour in a Latin school, some time ago, and witnessed a number of boys engaged in my former employments; and to-day something happened, or was mentioned in conversation, which has recalled them. My apparition, in the seat of an examiner, at the school of which I speak, seemed to strike a chill through the warm and ingenuous hearts of the pupils; ah! how lamentably abused by undeserved harshness; how intoxicated and debased by 200 turns with that fatal spur, emulation; that alcohol of the intellect, that labour-saving instrument to which the ignorant and the indolent teacher ever resorts, because it easily excites that attention which he ought to produce by displaying the attractions and the practical use of learning.

One interesting youth, at the head of his class, intoxicated with praise, and desperately fearing a fall “from his high estate,” showed extreme agitation in his eye, his cheek, and his voice; and experienced emotions more exhausting to his mind, I have no doubt, than the labour of mastering three such lessons. Another, smiling with the consciousness of a task well performed, and the anticipation of a successful recitation, failed through an amiable diffidence to retain his presence of mind; and from one accidental error fell into a labyrinth from which he could not recover his way, and sinking into his seat, with swelling veins, sobbed and wept till the close of the exercise. A third, after passing unhurt the ordeal of construing and parsing, was treated with a contemptuous expression by the teacher for a paltry fault in not discriminating between “the use of the poets” and “position” in giving the rules for scanning; and I saw his evil genius, an irritable temper, which ought to have been systematically pacified by a judicious treatment, rise and drive his feelings almost to desperation. This was as much as I could bear, and I was glad to retreat from such an intellectual and moral inquisition.

Library of Congress

A short interview with one of those active beings who have shared in the excitement and labours of our new and distant settlements, or beat the bush in advance of civilization, conveys more lively ideas of what is actually going on there, than reading all the essays and statistics in the world. Now and then we meet a stray one in this part of the country. He looks like a wild bird in an aviary, or amid a yard of domestic fowls: so regular and orderly and stupid do we all feel in his presence. Two or three such characters I have fallen in with; but it is impossible to get a regular narration out of them of greater length than a few minutes. They have brought their restless activity along with them, and seem physically unable to be quiet. One 201 of them attracted my attention as soon as I saw him in the boat. He had been everywhere—why, or how, I never knew.

“Was you ever in St. Louis? New-Orleans?”—“Ah, mon ami!”—“At Detroit?”—“There's a rough set of fellows. I was one of the first on the Upper Huron. It's getting settled now fast with people from New-York.”—“Have you ever been along to the north of Lake Superior?” He was a short man, in a blue jacket, with both hands on a double-barrelled rifle, and a powder-horn and shot-bag next his vitals. The outer rim of his eyelid was perpetually drawn up, lest it should intercept any of the view; for a good woodman's sight, I believe, sweeps three-quarters of a circle without moving the head. His feet were restless, as if he had been used to long grass and snakes; and although his age was probably fifty, every nerve was full of activity, every limb of vigour, and every motion and word of independence and fearlessness.

“Out on the Mississippi they are an active set of fellows,” said he; “they can build steamboats and launch them, and run them, and blow them up about as quick as any other people. ‘Shoal a-head!’ you'll hear 'em sing out—‘How do you know?’—‘Why, she ripples.’—‘Well, sit on the safety-valve, and jump her over!’ That's pleasant sailing enough, to be sure, where you find the watermen enterprising so; but it's cruel to see the deer come down to the shore to drink, and not stop to go after them with your rifle. I like the ground, I tell you. First I began along Lake Ontario. There's some woods there, but not

Library of Congress

much game; yet I thought it was fine fun to be all alone with my old gun. It was not very long, though, before I was off: and where do you think I was next? Why, after being at Cincinnati and St. Louis about one thing and another, I got out to Green Bay, among the Indians. There's a set of honest fellows for you. You needn't have anybody to go with you and say this is Mr. such a man. All you've got to do is, if you come across a bear or a deer, just shoot them, and leave them on the ground; and the first wigwam you come to, say, 'Friend, I've come among you for a little while to stay; I don't want any thing but just to shoot my rifle once in a while.—There's a bear or a deer just back in the woods, which any of you can have if you want it.' I tell you what, if they won't treat you like the biggest man! And you needn't do any more than this: the story will go before you; and wherever you come they know you; and how you can shoot a bear, or a deer, as the case may be. Well, then I thought I would go where there wasn't so much civilization; for I wanted to see more of the Indians; and I've been through that country all along a good piece north of Lake Superior."

"Do you know that district?" inquired a listener. "Ask my gun," replied the speaker. "I was there six weeks, all alone, among as good game as ever fell under a muzzle. That's the life: get two or three days' provisions of venison or bear's meat on your back, shot-bag full, powder-horn full; and then, if you meet an Indian, or a white man, or any thing, you can befriend them. But you want to know something of folks before you can trust them. The Green Bay Indians,—I should feel safe among them to lie right down on the ground, in the woods, between two, and sleep all night. Why, a man would be a great deal safer so than he would be in Broadway, in New-York, with fifty dollars in his pocket, at eleven o'clock at night.

"They are good fellows; but I'm ready to shoot with any of them:—walking, running, swimming, diving, flying, any way. I've shot with Egg Harbour fellows on the wing, and I'll try with an Indian any way he likes, till they come to a sitting mark and a dead rest; and then I've done with him."

Library of Congress

After the capture of the forts on the highlands by the British, in 1777, and breaking the chain stretched across the Hudson, at West Point, they sailed up; and, as I have been informed, burnt a brig in Saugerties Creek. They had a man on board, of Dutch extraction, who pointed out the dwellings of persons particularly obnoxious to the enemy. On passing the house where Washington had been quartered, they fired a shot through the roof. They burnt a brig, loaded with tea, in Saugerties Creek, and Mr. Livingston's house opposite and several others.

203

Saugerties, and the banks of the creek behind it, were settled by French Huguenots, who emigrated, after a long residence in Holland, bringing many Dutch connexions and the Dutch language with them, but a good deal of intelligence. Another settlement of the same kind was made below, at the Strand, one of the landings of Kingston; after which at the village of Kingston itself, and Marbletown. They chose the best soil. A German settlement was made west of the Catskill Mountains. At Tappan was a real Dutch settlement; and Newburgh was a colony of Irish. "Intelligence," regretted a fellow-passenger, who spoke from personal knowledge, "is at a low ebb. The intelligence of the original French faded away amid their scattered settlements and the dangers and trials of their situation, along with the language. The schools have been few and poor. The academy, founded at Newburgh many years ago, has produced considerable effects. Governor Clinton there received an important part of his education, as well as a number of other gentlemen distinguished in the learned professions. He probably learned here, from observation, the importance of public education, of which he became a most efficient advocate."

"See how much better I feel already," said a young lady to her father, as they sat down at breakfast; "I feel quite hungry, and have no doubt that by the time I have been at the Springs a week or two, if I have exercise enough, I shall have strength sufficient to set off for Niagara."—"Well," replied the father, who seemed to be absorbed in thoughts of his business, which he had reluctantly left at the city, as it would appear, to attend his

Library of Congress

daughter on a tour for pleasure, under the pretext of health,—“Well, if you get cured of your dyspepsia, or whatever it is, it's all I want. I am hungry, too: I believe this air is good for us both.” Neither of the two had sagacity enough to perceive, that rising two hours earlier than usual, with the excitement and exercise they had experienced, were the chief causes of the improvement of their appetites and the cheerfulness of their feelings; and that a more reasonable system of life at home would have had nearly the same effect on them every day.

204

And this is the simple truth in respect to a large majority of those who travel for their health every season. They might avoid the symptoms from which they suffer, by following a few of those simple rules of nature from which we never can deviate with impunity; or if they have become enfeebled or diseased by conformity to the examples of fashionable life, might thus soon and effectually recover a sound state of health. No apology can be necessary for my quoting here the adage so worn out by frequent repetitions in my youthful ears, because now it is entirely obsolete among many circles, and will sound like a perfect novelty.

“Early to bed and early to rise, Will make you healthy, wealthy, and wise.”

Retire and rise early; aim low in matters of show; and in things of solid worth let none shoot at a higher mark than you. Plan something useful every day; do something good every hour, and love something good every moment. Reject the foolish conceit, that any thing like useful labour can be dishonourable. Introduce your hands and feet to such services as they were designed for; while you occupy your mind with the contemplation of subjects worthy of its nature, and your heart with those pure affections on which alone it can thrive.

How I pitied this poor, puny, spoiled child! Every one, even the plainest of these doctrines, had been effectually shut out from her education. Thousands had been expended on

Library of Congress

teachers, books, and instruments; but it seemed as if not a pennyworth of good discipline or instruction had reached her head or her heart.

Amid a lively conversation on various topics, of no particular interest, I heard one remark which startled me:—"New-York," said a female voice, "is a city of the greatest taste in America." The speaker was a milliner, who was on her return to a country-town, with all the latest fashions, and I know not how many hundreds of dollars worth of silks, velvets, plumes, laces, plush, ribands, and straw. She had been requested, as she declared, by several of the ladies 205 of her neighbourhood, to make inquiries about the materials, form, and texture of bonnets, hats, handkerchiefs, and even dresses and shoes. As an accidental want of some of the refinements of speech might have rendered her importance among her own society somewhat doubtful, she took the pains to mention names, characters, and connexions, with the exact nature of the commissions she bore, and a variety of interesting matter relating to ways and means by which she had been enabled to accomplish them. I might have wondered, I suppose, why so many sedate, judicious, disinterested, and even literary ladies could feel so much anxiety to possess such objects; or to obtain this or that isolated fact or opinion from New-York milliners; but I was astonished to learn, that the rapid narrator had met so many persons like herself in the city, bound on similar errands, and loaded with just such commissions, from towns and villages east, west, north, and south. "The improvements in navigation," as a lady remarked, "were of great consequence; for, instead of being, as formerly, two or three months behind-hand in the fashions, we may now wear such hats in June as the Parisians have in May; and so be only about four or five weeks behind them all the year." A very interesting publication, also, had been commenced some time since in New-York, in French and English, expressly for the diffusion of intelligence in relation to dress; each number of which contains several fine-coloured engravings of costumes. So meritorious a work as this, and one, if possible, in advance of the spirit of the age, would, no doubt, meet abundant support; and was worthy of the broken-down French fancier who was to be the editor.

Library of Congress

Here, thought I, as I turned away from the hearing of such intellectual conversation, here is betrayed one of the cog-wheels of society. Here is one of those great counteracting influences which cause so much waste of power in our machine. Whoever has turned a crank, or pulled or pushed, to aid the advance of public intelligence, morals, or happiness, and wondered why his exertions proved of so little use, let him just look here. Here is enough to explain some part of his difficulty. Minds and hearts on which he 18* 206 has wished to make impressions, he may now see, were otherwise employed; money, a little of which was necessary to the accomplishment, was running out in floods another way; while principles of social harmony, disinterestedness, and benevolence, could not easily be cultivated, or even planted on ground occupied by those of an opposite nature. Here you will find one reason why incomes are not always equal to expenditures; why libraries are so small; the fireside so much deserted; schools so few and so poor; frivolity so much tolerated; health, in a thousand cases, unnecessarily exposed and life sacrificed.

But do not let me drone on so, while this is a note of the bagpipe which the ladies will not endure. The wives and daughters of fellow-citizens, of all classes, will unite, if in nothing else, in putting down him who assails their ears with such unwelcome sounds. I therefore must cease; otherwise they would have no longer peace of conscience in refusing dollar and half dollar contributions for the comfort of the poor, the instruction of the ignorant, the care of the aged, insane, or infirm; while they continue yearly to bestow ten or an hundred times the amount on such wares of their milliners and mantua-makers as they know to be quite unnecessary for comfort, convenience, and every thing, except—fashion.

207

CHAPTER XXVII.

The Privileges of American Citizens in Trial by Jury—Battle-ground of Saratoga—Former State of Ballston Springs—Leisure Time—The Beauties of the German Language—A Foreign Spirit in America—Value of our own Tongue.

Library of Congress

Seeing a court-house, certain old trains of thought were revived by the sight of judges on the bench, lawyers, witnesses, &c. There is much that is farcical in the details of our democratic system, when we come to trace out its familiar application to the every-day business of life. Why should we not sometimes enjoy the pleasure of laughing at them, at least until it can be proved that the risibles of man were constructed for no good use? We must laugh,—that is a settled thing; at any rate most of us: and of course the only questions now to be settled must be, when, where, and at what shall we and shall we not laugh. Notwithstanding the sanctity of a court, I have felt more than once that the jury-box was one of the fittest places; and as for the jury-room, that is a place for alternate smiles and tears. “All this,” as the language of counsel is, “I solemnly believe, and pledge myself to prove to the satisfaction of this intelligent jury.”

I was once, while a citizen of New-York, called from active business to sit on a petit-jury of the Court of Sessions, some time in the month of December, and made one of twelve men selected alphabetically from the Directory. We were of twelve different sizes, dresses, and colours, and in every possible particular, except the accidental one of having similar initial letters to our surnames, utterly impossible to be matched. Hudibras's various couplets of doggrel, relating to such scenes, began to course through my head, and overcame some of the disgust which would otherwise have overwhelmed me at the thoughts of what a day was before me. 208 ‘Gentlemen of the jury!’ The other eleven rose, and I for an instant kept my seat. If they were gentlemen, I certainly was not. An old beagle of an usurer was brought up, from one of the dark retreats of misery, to prosecute a pale and ragged man for the recovery of a debt. The counsel for the defence pleaded that the note was tainted with usury, and brought up a witness to prove it. He swore that the plaintiff's wife received an unlawful interest for the money in her husband's presence, and that this was the common manner in which they conducted business. We were filled with indignation; and to express our reprobation of such an enormity, found a verdict for defendant without leaving our seats. We had not learned a lesson which I was afterward taught in an inferior

Library of Congress

tribunal; but after receiving a shilling a man, sighed and prepared to try a long case which had been long in court, and had a long tail to it.

A question of the genuineness of certain signatures occupied us a time; during which I was struck with two kinds of sagacity; that of the bank clerks and others in judging of handwriting, and that of counsel in leading them to nullify their own testimony in the eye of a jurymen. Several of the most acute of the former had previously examined about a dozen specimens, and fixed on a portion of them as genuine. Several of these had now been withdrawn, and recent imitations put in their place. The witnesses, incautiously perhaps, by turns, selected what each supposed to be genuine, while the counsel kept careful notes of their different opinions, distinguishing the specimens by private marks. The confused result, when read to us, overthrew the whole force of their testimony, and in my mind human infallibility received a blow from which it has never recovered. This part of the trial was serious, and that on several accounts; but when we withdrew to the jury-room, and were locked up together to determine on damages, I was compelled to laugh in the midst of my vexation. Among twelve men there were immediately proved to be ten of one opinion. Of the rest, one had slept through the whole trial, and the other knew no difference between the counsel's peroration and the judge's charge. It was even doubtful 209 whether he had yet found out that we were on 'an action of trover:' though it had been most solemnly repeated so often expressly for our edification. Both of them found a fine fire of hard coal burning, and said, in conscience, give a verdict for plaintiff. A new-light republican, not many years since from England, took advantage of the occasion to open a debating-club, professing to have just become a little beeheaded on the subject; and in spite of every thing, began with a regular peroration, and proceeded through an harangue, which consumed time and patience, as the steamboats consume fuel. For my part, I made reflections during the five hours we spent there, which I have never since repeated with equal solemnity. After all, thought I, what is liberty, if a man is liable to be torn from business in the day-time, and from family and home at night, because a stranger in his country, five or six years ago, did commit forgery; because two or three, lawyers

Library of Congress

have chosen to give the question all possible doubtfulness; because two out of twelve men have no understanding, or no honesty, or no warm clothing: for by this time I began to perceive a disposition in the dissentients to yield their point, and observed that the fire had sunk, and the snow-storm had begun to chill the room. They soon agreed on a verdict.

I visited the battle-ground on Bemis's Heights in company with several friends more familiar than myself with the circumstances of the campaign of seventy-seven, and a guide who professed to have been in the action. The elevation of the ground is much more considerable than I had supposed. When we began to ascend from the bank of Cummingskill, the road was so narrow and steep, and often so much overhung by trees, as to be at once laborious and gloomy. The impressions were increased by the recollection that Burgoyne's army had marched up the same path in the anticipation of further success, and a final victory over the country. The whole field of battle, then covered with forests, except two cleared fields, is now unincumbered except by a few fences and scattering trees; and we were shown the line of the British, with the routes by which Morgan, Arnold, and our other officers assailed it at different periods of the action, and with various success. I hate the details of slaughter, ever since I have overcome the savage and heathen impressions I received with my "liberal education." I learnt to admire them from the notes of admiration with which the classics abound for those notorious butchers, who in former times did so much business under different firms:—Alexander, Hannibal and Co., Cæsar and brothers. I therefore did not regret that the battle on this ground amounted only to a matter of a thousand or so killed on both sides—a mere skirmish, in the opinion of an European. General Wilkinson tells facts which show, that there was excitement enough here to raise in some individuals the most barbarous and blood-thirsty spirit.

Our guide appeared sometimes at fault, but never being disposed to acknowledge it, generally found a reply to every question. Two of the party differed about the spot

Library of Congress

on which General Frazer fell, and inquired of him—"Where was General Frazer wounded?"—"Let me see," said he, "I believe in the bowels, pretty much."

I heard the late General Van Cortlandt, a colonel in the New-York line, and participator in this battle, say, that he was not brought into action until late in the afternoon of the 29th of September, when he was ordered by Arnold to take post beyond the left of our line, and engage in action or not, as he might judge proper. He engaged a regiment of Hessians, of whose short guns our soldiers did not think much, and drove them back. One of his officers was wounded by his side, and he placed him upon his horse. While pursuing, he met a regiment of British light infantry on his flank, and partly in his rear, advancing and firing, but without seeing them in the darkness. He halted in a foot-path nearly parallel to them, about a foot lower than the surface of the ground, ordering his men not to fire till they should see the enemy's flash, and then aim a little below it. Directly the flash was seen all along their line, the fire was immediately returned, and this checked them. He then went round to his officers, and ordered them to withdraw quietly, and returned to camp. After an engagement of an hour and a half, he had lost one man to every five and a half in his 211 regiment. Colonel Cilley lost but one out of seven in five or six hours.

While in the vicinity of Bemis's Heights, I was reminded of several anecdotes I had heard at different periods, and from different persons, relating to the battles here and at the Wallomsac, the last of which is usually called the battle of Bennington. What must have been the state of the country, when the panic caused by the desertion of Fort Ticonderoga was such, that although a long delay took place before General Burgoyne began to march from Whitehall, he met no opposition until he reached this spot. Exertions were made by the patriotic who were yet undiscouraged, to raise the people in arms; but how was it to be expected that the militia could stop the course of an army, before which regular troops had fled out of the principal fortress of the country? The history of the time has been written several times, and narrated a thousand. I will therefore leave my readers to books, and

Library of Congress

only repeat two or three tales I have heard from private sources. Word of mouth has often a charm, because it conveys feeling, and that everybody can understand.

“My father,” said a gentleman I once conversed with, “lived in Berkshire County, Massachusetts, when the news came that the Hessians were going to seize the stores on the Wallamsac Creek, and all the force of the country was wanted. He was a hardy farmer, and well-known thereabouts, so that he had been chosen captain of a company of old men, exempt from service by age, which had been raised for any case of extremity. This company, which was called the ‘Silver Grays,’ in allusion to their hoary hair, set off for the scene of action immediately, and was on the ground on the morning of the battle, in time to have a part assigned in the attack made upon the intrenched line of the enemy. On account of the respectability of the company, they were left to choose their place; and agreed to attack the tory fort, as a redoubt on an eminence was called, which had been entrusted to the Americans accompanying the Hessian troops. The captain informed his men that it was his intention to approach their object through a ravine which he observed led in that direction, to enjoy all the shelter it might afford. ‘Captain,’ said a large and powerful man, in the prime of life, stepping forward, pale and trembling, ‘I am not going to fight: I came to lead back the horses. ‘Go, then,’ said the captain, with indignation; ‘we shall do better without a coward in our number.’—‘Deacon—,’ said he to a little old man, shrivelled with age, ‘you are too feeble to bear the fatigues of the day. It is my pleasure that you stand sentry over the baggage.’

“‘With your leave, captain,’ said the old man, stepping forward, and making the soldier's sign of respect to a superior, with as much the air of a youth as he could,—‘With your leave I will have a pull at 'em first.’

“The company expressed their admiration at his spirit; and under the feelings it produced, succeeding as it did the display of arrant cowardice in a younger man, they marched on at quick step towards the enemy. When they reached the end of the ravine, the captain intended to form and attack, supposing they must yet be at some distance from the

Library of Congress

redoubt. Instead of this, on looking up he found himself almost at the base of it, and the Tories taking aim at him from above. In an instant he lay upon the ground, a bullet having passed through his foot; and a friend near him ran to raise him, supposing him killed. He sprang upon his feet, however, and just then seeing a red-coat hurrying across a field at a distance, a thought came into his head to encourage his men, and he cried out—‘Come on, they run, they run.’ The old men climbed up, jumped into the fort, and in a moment the Silver Grays had complete possession of it, without the loss of one of their number.”

About five years ago I obtained a few facts from the late Colonel Ball, of Ballston, relating to the early history of the Springs and the neighbouring watering-place. The village of Ballston Spa lies within the limits of the township of Milton, adjoining that of Ballston. This region was named after the father of my informant, who removed hither from Westchester County, in 1769, and built the first house on the banks of Kayderos, or Kayderoseras Brook, the frame of which was standing near the academy.

213

At that time, the low grounds near the Springs of Ballston were covered with a forest, and the old spring (the only one then known) was overflowed by the brook when it was much swollen by the rain. The deer used to come to lick at the spring; and he has been there in his youth to ambush and shoot them. It was not uncommon then to meet deer in looking for stray cattle; and the Indians often came from Oneida to hunt, in bodies of two or three hundred. No Indians, however, had their residence in this vicinity. His father, at an interview with Sir William Johnson, once heard from him the particulars of the wound which he received in the battle of Lake George, in 1755, which was in the front part of his thigh, and remained open till he died. Two physicians afterward recommended to Sir William to visit the Spring, the water being celebrated at Albany and Schenectady as good in some diseases. Sir William, therefore, sent about ten men to clear a road for his carriage, or litter, from Schenectady to the Spring, under the direction of Mr. Ball; and my informant dined with him in a large marquée, pitched on the level border of Ballston Lake. Near the same place were the log-houses of two men named McDonald, who had settled

Library of Congress

there about seven years before his father's arrival. The company afterward proceeded to the Spring, where Sir William used the water, but without any material benefit.

While speaking of old times, I may mention, that a few years ago, a small image of a man, made, I think, of bone, with garnets for eyes, was found near that little lake, bearing a strong resemblance in form and appearance to such as have been taken from some of the western mounds, according to Mr. Atwater, and tending to confuse us still more in our conjectures about the origin of the former inhabitants of this part of the country.

Leisure time—here is a portion of existence which is to be carefully regarded and watched over, whether it belongs to individuals or to communities. What progress in knowledge might the most humble, even the most busy person make in the course of his life, if he were to pursue some judicious plan for the occupation of his leisure moments! 19

214

What misery and ignorance, what sufferings and crimes might be prevented if provision were made in every village or town for the useful occupation of the unemployed time of those who most need some arrangements for the purpose!

We have often evidence presented of the great amount of leisure time at the command of different individuals. Look at the libraries of monkish manuscripts in Europe, and those innumerable collections of paintings, as well as the millions of pictures scattered through the old world, from the pencils of artists who laboured for the mere gratification of taste, or by a desperate hope borne up against every discouragement. Listen to, or rather think of the thousands of tales which are told over and over again by the populace of every country in their intervals of labour; and think of the wear and tear of tongues, and ears, and feelings required to carry on the tittle tattle of four or five continents. And why the “busy member” is not worn out, or at least tired, is a great wonder. It is like the ocean, fretting rocks into pebbles, and grinding them to sand, with an exertion of force which might be employed to construct temples or pyramids. Leisure time should be first guarded against

Library of Congress

injurious employments, and then, if possible, against those which are merely harmless. Let the parent and the teacher act on this simple principle, and he will lay a basis which must bear a noble structure. Even in a single day, a single individual may thus accomplish much; how much more a parent with a company of children, or the benevolent man who can give a direction to society!

At these watering-places we meet a great variety of company.

It sometimes seems to me as if we begin to stray into some folly as soon as we begin to leave home. I have been listening to the remarks of a gentleman on the beauties and perfections of the German language; and all I find in my own honest mind, as the result of his conversation, is such an impression as would have been left if he had openly belied our country, and concluded by preferring Iceland or Gulliver's Brobdignag. This is not because I am disposed to underrate German or any other language; but because I have a just esteem for English. I dare say that in my heart my regard for German is equal to his, nay, that I should value it, on the whole, more than he. I do not love Cæsar less, but I love Rome more. There is a propensity in us, under the influence of the schools we have passed through, to know little of ourselves and of what belongs to us; and to seek every pretext for admiring what is foreign. I take a part of the same condemnation to myself—I found it first, and have observed it most frequently, in myself. I am only anxious to see it cured, and do not wish to fix discredit anywhere, except so far as is necessary, when I would show the source of the evil.

We begin with being required to admire beauties in Greek and Latin, which are of three classes: 1. Real, substantial ones, not found in our own language. 2. Such as exist in our own, and which we might far more perfectly, as well as easily, have comprehended in English, if they had been pointed out to us: 3. Defects and deformities, or false beauties; as for instance, the frequent use of the third person singular for the third person plural in Greek verbs, in violation of grammatical decency. This is peculiar to Greek, we are told, and there is a rule for it. There is an “exception” for it, but no possible apology. But,

Library of Congress

whether good, bad, or indifferent, this is the way in which many of us have been educated with a contempt for the beauties of English; and if we ever obtain a relish for them, it is only by the independent use of our own minds breaking the halter of education.

I was speaking of German. Like every language, it has its peculiarities when compared with another; but it is not necessarily superior in every particular, because it may be in some. It is unjust and injurious to admire its excellences and overlook those of English; but it is ridiculous to overpraise in it exactly the qualities which we familiarly resort to in our own tongue, for use or embellishment in our discourse. But examples are most to our purpose. The German is susceptible of endless combinations; so is the English. They may take a verb, liken *gehen*, to go, I 216 was told, and by prefixing their highly-expressive prepositions, vary its meaning to a great degree. And so refined, delicate, and cultivated is this tongue, that “shades of meaning” may be conveyed from mind to mind, as it were, “which no one can conceive who is unacquainted with this most perfect vehicle of thought!” Now, the very expression of such a preposterous sentiment (so insulting, if it were not too ridiculous to be so), called to my mind good English verbs and epithets, simple, compound, and mixed, enough to break its back and sink it. Indeed, the language seemed to be aroused to repel such a Gothic invasion; and many files of our good old Saxon words mustered out, as the farmers did at Bennington, to fight the Hessians. There was especially Colonel Go and his family regiment, and I recognised Undergo, Overgo, Forego, with all the files of the Bygones, the Ingoings, and the Outgoings, and I know not how many more. “Ah, Captain Invade!” said I, “you are a good man, I may want you by-and-by to *go into* the enemy's country; but you are out of place, you do not belong here.” “Pardon, sir,” said he; “but I belong to the family. Didn't one of my grandfathers come to England from Rome, and marry her that was—.” “True,” said I, “you are right—Captain, or Centurion Vado; and when I said go into, I but translated your name, sir.” “Just so,” said he; “and here is my regiment—let me introduce you to Major Evade, and Lieutenant-colonel Pervade. I have not an officer or a rank and file man who is not of the family.” “Let me see,” said I, “did not your Roman ancestor sometimes spell his name with a W?”

Library of Congress

“That,” said he, “I have never been told, but I have suspected it. I have never heard much said about him, and have felt almost ashamed of him: for though he and many of his family had served under the Cæsars, he emigrated to a barbarous”country. So far as I have found, one of his sons married an *Out*, and I believe this is the only one who ever kept both the mother's name and the *W*. The others, who spelled with a *V*, married into Roman families. However, I must look at the books of heraldry: Johnson's, and Walker's, and Webster's. Sergeant Wade will he good, 217 if we have shoal water to cross; and Corporal Outwade is better than he.”

But the German language is said to admit of other combinations, with peculiar ease and force, (for I cannot give a longer report of this grand review of our numerous and effective troops—our great army of Vernaculars). And cannot we do so too? Indeed, can we get along without the use of the same grammatical join-hand?—Ecce signum! How is this word *join-hand* made? Why, just as the refined and elegant German makes its own word for *glove*—hand-schuh (hand-shoe!) O, the inimitable splendours of the sublimated foreign tongues. Hand-schuh! It is true we cannot say that in English for *glove*, but we may use hand-saw, hand-pump, hand-blow, hand-cloth, and many other combinations we find convenient, beside making it a verb, and changing it into handle (as a noun, an active and passive verb), into right and left-hand, each of which also may become an active or passive verb, if we please, or may be used after a preposition, or as an adjective; as on the right-hand-near the left-hand corner, &c. &c.

I have, perhaps, said too much on this subject; but I have *undergone* so much in hearing our language *ill-treated*, that I could not *forego* this opportunity to *repel*, *resist*, and *throw back* a little upon the *aggressors*. And who can utter a sentence in English without admiring the rich compound structure of the language, or, perhaps, not less extensive and various than any other civilized tongue in this sort of combinations, when we include the Latin branches? How wonderful is the range afforded us in conversation and writing; and how adapted to every purpose the familiar, brief, forcible, and honest Saxon words, ever giving readiest passage to a gush of feeling, whether raised by a witty conceit,

Library of Congress

swelled by joy, or melted by sorrow. This is a language by itself, and yet but half what we possess. There is the Latin, more smooth and soft, with words of greater length and sweeter harmony, possessing also a plan of combinations in some respects different, and affording opportunities for clear, though distant allusions, and derivations which point back to a refined source in a classic and polished 218 age. Then turning to Greek: how many useful and elegant words do we count, which stand forward in the panoply of Homer's heroes, and with voices that remind us by turns of the winged and the honeyed accents of ancient times, as well as of the brazen-throated trumpets which sounded before Ilium. How do these noble languages, like two fertilizing streams from the same pure and lofty fountain, enrich our native tongue! Think of the fine, sonorous terminations which fix their golden and diamond tips on the noblest stanzas of our great heroic poets, and engrave them deeply on our hearts. Remember the abundant supply of prefixes with which we can grasp every verb in the language; and, as if with the hand on the plough, or a gentle touch of the courser's rein, or the richer than silken tie which draws the carrier pigeon home, we can guide them where we will:—

“On earth, in air, and under ground.”

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Thoughts on Foreign Travel—Dr. Sweet, the natural Bone-setter—Retiring Travellers.

How rapid is the mind, and how rapid indeed is the tongue, although it has passed into a common remark, that the latter can never pretend to race with the former. Part of a pleasant morning spent in conversation with a friend who has just landed from an European tour, has taken me in fancy over so much ground, revived the memory of so many past scenes, and enriched me with so many new ideas, that it seems as if time had been quadrupled in duration. Surely travel is an enriching, an ennobling, an exalting, as well as a delightful employment, when properly used; and my friend, I am convinced, has been successful above, most 219 others in making the best use of his opportunities. I saw

Library of Congress

him before he sailed, nay, I knew him. He had long made up his mind that this world is a place of passage, a thorough-fare to a better, abounding with enjoyments which may become sources of acute and lasting pain, and with trials which may be converted into joys of the most exquisite and lasting nature. He was a Christian, and I had seen the fact established by severe afflictions. Having viewed and reviewed with him, in anticipation, the temptations of Europe, and indulged, at parting, in reliance on him who can aid and preserve, it was not strange that I should feel deeply interested in every thing he saw and felt during his absence, on ground which I had passed over.

Christianity has a thousand charming smiles, tones, attitudes, and actions at home: but how it strikes us to see it developed abroad and among foreign scenes! Her spirit, fit for every climate and society, blesses all which she visits. It is particularly delightful to trace her course through a region of the earth like Italy, which has so long been regarded by us as devoted to the enjoyments of taste. Taste there appears ranged side by side with her, in scenes peculiarly appropriate to display her nature and to exhibit her superiority with advantage. What a pity it is that religion, in her unostentatious but not unfrequent visits to that attractive land, should not have become more an object of attention to our countrymen! If we could be furnished with her views and reflections among the monuments of antiquity, we should find that mere antiquarian knowledge has not equal power to render interesting the dust of past generations, or to enlighten the gloom of decay.

Among the numerous visiters to Italy who speak our language, there are annually to be found some of a most devoted religious character. Some are driven by shortened incomes to consult economy abroad; others go under the advice of physicians; some travel to improve their minds, that they may become more useful to the world; and some are borne in the trains of more gay or ostentatious friends, on whom they are dependant. But amid so many memorials of the past leading to contemplation, and such a flood of 220 ignorant and trifling minds devoted to the present, how interesting do such individuals appear. Whatever their age, their costumes, or the motives of their journey, they are alike in most

Library of Congress

important respects. They regard things around them as they really are, not as they pretend to be; they discriminate between the right and the wrong use of the enjoyments which are offered to them, and derive real happiness from things neglected by the crowd, while they are not disappointed by unreasonable expectations founded on an erroneous estimate of others. They do not of course underrate the importance of times that are past, because they regard the present as of most consequence to themselves, but draw lessons from former generations to exalt or to purify their own thoughts and actions to-day. A young Christian in Italy, who thus pursues the great objects of his life, has to encounter obstacles and discouragements, and to overcome difficulties which require great decision, resolution, and perseverance, and rapidly ripen his heart and his mind. Indeed, the older and more experienced, while surveying the scenes which Italy presents, feel that there they need peculiar watchfulness and care over their feelings, because external attractions are greatly increased; while the external aids of Christian society are at the same time removed. Whatever alarms the Christian's fear, or awakens his self-suspicion, tends to exhibit more clearly his Christian character; and whatever removes the tarnish from such metal as that of which it is formed, polishes pure gold. Superior worth and solidity therefore begin to display themselves by a surface of superior brightness, and under such circumstances real religion assumes a peculiar nobleness both in aspect, language, and demeanour.

"I found, in a small circle of religious travellers at Naples," said my friend, "a new tone of manners and conversation. I was received among persons accustomed to etiquette with the greatest frankness and familiarity; and had never realized so strongly the force of a favourite expression of the New Testament: 'Where the spirit of God is, there is liberty.' I found access not merely to their lodgings and their acquaintance, but to their hearts. And the 221 formalities of fashionable intercourse, with all the falsehood of selfishness, being discarded, it was delightful to observe how the mind made progress in knowledge, while the heart found full exercise for its affections. Less swayed than other travellers in matters of taste, by current ideas, their opinions of scenes and objects in nature and art were generally more just, because more independent; while their impressions were

Library of Congress

more distinct, and their descriptions more vivid. In relation to men, also, they had generally something new and valuable to communicate: for having their attention directed after what has merit, or to discover persons on whom they might confer benefits, they were often found to have observed characters which others pass by without heeding. False opinions are abundant all around them, and are so much in vogue, that some will receive and pass them off as sound, for mere fashion's sake; but they feel like Bunyan's pilgrims in Vanity Fair; and when such wares are offered them, are ready to reject them and to exclaim, —“We buy the truth.”

What a contrast, what a delightful contrast it seems, after witnessing the gaudy and pompous, but unmeaning ceremonies of a Neapolitan carnival, or having the hermit of the grotto of Posilipo shake his box of coppers at you, to close the day with a circle of Christian friends, where the fire of the purest love consumes all memory of difference in sect and country, among those who possess one faith and one hope.

The different ways in which persons of exalted character are affected by foreign travel are often various, but almost always important. One receives an impression, from the majesty of some ruin, of the transitory nature of life; while his companion is reproved by it for the little he has accomplished. Some have made the people, whom they have seen degraded to the dust, the subjects of their daily prayers; while others have been filled with the idea that America possesses incalculable advantages for establishing a name and a praise in the earth. One will ever after regard in a more important light all the means by which intelligence is diffused, and fix much of his attention for the remainder of 222 his life on the minds and hearts of the young, and the books, the examples, and schools by which they are to be educated; while to another will afterward seem ever present those powerful motives to action, which are excited by the contemplation of heathen magnificence among the unmeaning splendour with which a degenerate taste endeavours to eclipse it.

Nothing is pleasanter than to meet with a person of true piety, who has returned from a foreign tour, with such impressions as we must expect them to bring home, when their

Library of Congress

circumstances have been favourable for receiving them. Ignorance of foreign languages and habits, too rapid travelling, or infirm health, may prevent them; but if circumstances have been favourable, you may see a gratifying change in them, and every thing they can control around. One such person will spice the conversation of a whole neighbourhood, and sometimes turn the minds of hundreds into better channels. His library is placed on a new footing, he reviews and improves some of his old opinions, he looks upon things about him with new eyes, for even trivial affairs remind him of great duties heretofore underrated. The traveller, perhaps, who passes the residence of such a man, even years after his death, admires some institution for public benefit which owes its origin to his piety and his foreign tour.

Many persons have probably seen in the newspapers advertisements of “Dr. Sweet, —Natural Bone-setter.” It is not everybody who has met him, or any of his remarkable family. How many there are of the name, or how many there have been famed for peculiar skill in anatomy, I have not been able to ascertain, because there is uncertainty and some discrepancy among the family traditions. One account I have heard, says, that the ancestor of the American Sweets was a celebrated surgeon to the king, regularly bred to the profession in England, but disaffected on some account, and a voluntary exile to the colonies, who chose one of the islands in Providence River, in Rhode-Island, for his abode. There, devoting himself to the education of his children, he taught them the principles of his own science, which they afterwards made a study by means of his library. From this beginning, the family are said to have had a strong propensity to anatomy; and for several generations, if we might credit report, individuals of both sexes have often amused themselves in childhood with dislocating the joints of kittens and chickens, and setting them again; and more humanely, in mature life, while engaged in the labours of the field or workshop, by reducing displaced bones to their sockets for miles around, and for prices so low that the mere mention of them has often excited the patient's laughter. The production of this latter symptom is perhaps the most extraordinary fact relating to their practice, and gives them a double claim to their surname.

Library of Congress

The individual of this family whom I met with this season, was of a different branch, and had only the following account to give of his history. "The Sweets, I believe, have always been bone-setters from before the memory of man. It's a natural gift, for wise purposes bestowed, and should be employed with a proper sense of dependance. My father was a physician, and the first surgical operation I ever attempted was at fourteen years of age, when I reduced a dislocated thumb for a patient who applied for aid during the absence of my father. After this I felt somewhat bold, and made a number of successful experiments, studying such scientific books as I could obtain. I believe the skill I have is in a great measure a natural gift, and that I am accountable for the use of it. I have set a good many poor people's bones for nothing; but I calculate to make the rich pay for it, though not very exorbitantly."

"Well, doctor," said a man who recognised him, "how do you find them at the South? You've been to the South lately, haven't you?"

"Why, yes, I was down into the State of New-Jersey, and in Pennsylvania some:—why, a good many lame hips, and so on."

"Well, did you go among the broken bones in New York?"

"Yes, I find, wherever I go the second time, that they get new bones out about as fast as I put 'em in, so as to keep 224 me to work. But I like it well enough as long as the floors don't break down. When I was at Danbury, in Connecticut, they'd got wind of my coming, and collected all the sufferers they could find in the neighbourhood into one room. It was up stairs, over a hatter's shop; about fifty men were assembled there together, full half of them, as was said, being patients, and the rest spectators. The doctors had come to see me work; for they didn't believe I could do any thing or knew any thing. Well, as there was a good deal of work to be done, and no time to spare, I advanced to a man in the corner that had his shoulder out, and had been pronounced incurable. I took hold on it and set it, and told him to put on his hat, which he did; and this elated him so much that he began

Library of Congress

to whirl his arm round for joy, and to show how well he felt, right before the doctors and all, when I began to feel the floor sway away under me, and down we all went into a heap, maimed ones and all. I slid and fell, as we reckoned afterward, about twenty-seven foot, and got up among the rest in the hatter's shop. What was wonderful about it was, that though the floor settled down principally at one corner, while the opposite one didn't give way, it held together, and so kept us out of the hatter's kettles, which were full of hot water; and though a large square cast-iron stove fell down among us, it didn't hurt anybody. There were only three or four bones put out by the accident; and when I had set these and the old ones, hips, shoulders, elbows, and all, I had to set off for another town, where I had an engagement to do more work of the like nature. They had a proper laugh at the doctors at Danbury, telling them they had set the trap to kill me; but. I told them that if they had known the danger, they would not have put their own heads into it.”

There is a class of single gentlemen found among the great swarms of travellers which every year pass over our country, who seem to be ever in search of solitude and tranquillity, as much as others are for crowds and tumults; and who, although they are often borne along by the current, actually enjoy many hours of loneliness. They are generally individuals who have had more than common experience in the world, and yet through the influence of good education or good early examples, have a taste that seeks something superior to its follies. Their previous life has rendered them thoughtful without souring their tempers, and disposed them to shun rather than condemn the society they cannot approve. I speak not here of the solitude which retires to its chamber, and when it has shut the door, reproaches Providence for embittering what discontent refuses to enjoy. Those of whom I speak are found on the hill-tops at sunrise, in a sultry hour among the shady rocks and wilds, or meditating in the fields at eventide.

Isaac Walton describes your true angler as very humane and friendly. He and his anglers were drawn from persons of this class. It is not angling they seek,—it is the enjoyment of solitude, or rather the society of nature; and the fishing-rod is only an apology for staying from home by the day or the week. We are to blame for rendering field-sports in some

Library of Congress

measure necessary to many persons of intelligence, taste, and leisure. We ought not to reproach them for being found in solitary scenes, even though they are unarmed with guns or fishing-tackle. As it is not lawful to kill the inferior animals for sport, but as it is perfectly proper and indeed useful to frequent our wild scenes, and to enjoy the beauties of nature, we ought to furnish the fairest and finest with things necessary to comfort and convenience, and rather approve than despise those who select them for reading or meditation. To no unknown individual in Italy do I feel more obliged, than to him who constructed a rustic seat on the tall rocks opposite the falls of Terni, thatched it with boughs and cushioned it with leaves; and no example should I sooner recommend to the friend of that class of travellers of which I am speaking. Their choice of the retreats of the forest and shore, as I remarked, is owing to their love for the spots where the fish and the birds resort, and not to the love of slaughter, although there are persons of a different character who delight only in the shedding of blood.

These tasteful travellers may be distinguished from the common herd by an experienced eye. They keep, as it were, along the green margin of the road, while they pursue its general course; they wander a little up the cool valleys and streams that open to the right and left, and the shade of the trees and the dashing of water are for them. While others, perhaps, of their own party, are complaining of coarse food and hard couches, their appetites are sharpened by exercise, or they are enjoying refreshing slumbers in a green shade.

I was a visiter in a house when the family returned from their annual tour; and from their conversation found, that while some of the individuals brought back only records of wasted time, and the observations of the most common minds, as barren as the beaten roads they had passed over, others had come home with a store of recollections, which might serve, like a hortus siccus, or a well-filled sketch. book, for the gratification of themselves and their friends for a year to come, and the value of which might last for a much longer period.

Library of Congress

So many of us are brought up unfit for the world we live in, that a great part of society, in their pursuit of happiness, seem to spend life either in seeking for the knowledge they ought to have imbibed in youth, or amid the frivolities or the vices which are its only substitutes. This appears to be a general picture of society among us. We do not strongly realize the fact unless we travel; and then we find our own minds and those of our companions betraying at every step some strong evidence of deficiency. I sat in an elegant railroad-car, with a large company of travellers, several of whom were unknown to me. Why were we silent after a few remarks on indifferent topics? Because we were ignorant. When we had seated ourselves at the dinner-table, however, there was no lack of conversation or of cheerfulness; and I presume the chief part of the pleasure enjoyed by the party that day was during the time devoted to eating. There we were at home. Ah! how much of the enjoyment of home then, with the mass of people, are we to fear, is connected with a source not more exalted? Some of us had been curious to know some simple facts concerning different objects around, but either presumed on the ignorance²²⁷ of our companions, or feared to expose our own by making them subjects of conversation; and so we jogged on in silence, as truly travellers as the horses which drew us along, and doing what only fashion saves from ridicule: that is, coursing over the country without definite object, and without the least chance of intellectual improvement. On reaching the place where we were to separate, I felt so much ashamed of my companions, that I was determined to avoid bidding any of them farewell: but I found they had apparently formed the same resolution about me, and thought me, as I appeared, and as I greatly fear I am, as great a dunce at travelling as any of them.

Oh, had I been taught, in my childhood, what I so much desired to know, the names, nature, and uses of the trees and plants by which we passed that day, or the composition of the soils which produced them, or a little of the principles of engineering to understand the constructions and excavations of the railroad, or been informed of the history, products, or inhabitants of that part of the country in such a manner as to feel an interest in them; or had any of my companions come so furnished with materials for conversation,

Library of Congress

that day had not been the source of pain rather than of pleasure, nor have become the cause of so much self-condemnation.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Evil effects of Pagan Education in a Christian Land—Improvements in Temperance—Sources of intemperate Habits in our Country—Proper Estimation of Foreign Travel—Our own Moral and Physical Resources—Negligence of good Men in making Travels at home Pleasing and Useful—A Card-party in a Steamboat.

I can hardly read a prospectus of a new academy, or see the advertisement of a college, without being reminded in a painful manner of the perversions practised in my own education. 228 Truly I was led by a thorny, a crooked, and a dangerous way! Why I did not turn back, and run out of that mud road, I can hardly tell. I remember I was strongly tempted, when I found some of my favourite companions deserting it one after another, and saw the grassy walks of agriculture, and the sparkling paths of business sometimes offering strong attractions. It is high time that we should realize that certain sorts of knowledge may pervert the heart while they fill the head. Look at history, for example, and remember, that not we, but some of the worst men of heathen times are in fact, at this moment, teaching our children their own views of past events, in our own schools and under our own eyes. Do we not put the classical writers in the place of schoolmasters and parents, and make the young admire what they commend? And whose views do the ancient writers maintain? All of them the views of heathenism; and not a few of them are mere echoes of the selfish or profligate rulers who patronised them to secure their praise, and dictated what they should withhold, what record, and what pervert. Ought not such pernicious influences at least to be counteracted? Ought not the teacher who enlarges on the beauties of Virgil and Cæsar, Ovid and Horace, to condemn the principles and motives they so often applaud, and correct the erroneous ideas which the pupil must otherwise imbibe? Some view or other is to be taken of history by every one who reads. There is a right and there is a wrong view, and they are totally inconsistent with each

Library of Congress

other. The splendours of Greek and Roman heroes long absorbed my mind; and for years I had no taste for the view of history given by the Scriptures. The superintending power of the Creator was not present to my mind when, I read of Juno and Jupiter, the Fates and Fortune. It has cost me long and violent struggles to divest myself of the taste, as well as of some of the views, which I imbibed from my education at a grammar-school and college.

But now, how sublime as well as how lovely is the aspect which history presents! Miserable, undefined Fortune has been banished and pains my heart no longer with the gloomy reflection that the disposer of my lot is blindfolded; while the God of Abraham presides over the destinies of man, whose interests are as important as they were in past ages, and none more so than my own. I am now able to enjoy greater pleasure in contemplating nations at peace, and observing the progress of refinement, than I ever derived from the confused noise of the warrior and garments rolled in blood. Just and delightful pictures of peace and its blessings we find in the Scriptures, and war we see in its own deformity. Then let us not present scenes of carnage and barbarity, of pollution and crime, to our children, at least without removing a part of that false veil which heathen poets and historians have spread over them. If our parents and teachers had taught us less of strife and the delights of victory, certain it is they would have had less difficulty in governing us, and we less in controlling ourselves.

There is one continual source of pleasure to the traveller in our country, let his course be turned in almost any direction: that is, the evident decline of intemperance. Even when I have been passing through places with which I was least acquainted, the evidences I have found of the diminution of this evil have seemed like springs in the wilderness; but in regions which I had known in less favourable times, the changes are so evident and so numerous as to excite great pleasure, I hope not unmingled with gratitude to Him who has said to the flood of devastation, "Here shall thy proud waves be stayed." How many a pang of keen sympathetic misery have I been spared on my tour, by the partial scotching of that serpent, that infernal demon, which was so lately ranging unchecked through our country!

Library of Congress

How blessed is the deliverance from such a monster! It is with anguish now that I recall the days when I so often dreaded to inquire, in a family circle, or in a public festival, for some one I missed from his place, lest the mention of his name should wrest from tortured lips a confession that would scorch the cheeks and scarify the heart.

The late prevalence of intemperance I trace in part to the broad foundations laid in the times preceding our own. The close of the war left the country in an immoral condition. 20* 230 The disbanding of the army converted our villages almost into camps, so far as the habits of men were concerned; and the vicious practices of soldiers co-operating with the desultory employment of leisure time, which is naturally produced by along period of war and public calamities, stamped a low character upon society through a great part of the country. Public calamities had proved fatal, in a thousand instances, to private fortunes; and many of those persons, who might otherwise have possessed the means of obtaining an education, were cut off from it by poverty, or by the prolonged depreciation of learning in the public estimation. Gunpowder, bayonets, soldiers, and military skill were objects of praise and admiration; and as taste and literature could not purchase these, they were but lightly esteemed. Of course, peace found the country abounding in many young and empty heads, and, what was worse, with morals corrupt beyond their years. It was the tendency of such a state of things to honour the tavern and to break up the family circle; and in many a town and village the former was the great resort of fathers and sons, while the mothers were too often left to solitary regret and tears among the broken fragments of the latter. Who does not remember something of such a state of society? Who, at least, has not perceived traces of it in the Bacchanalian stories, and the tales of village wit, whose narration to a later generation has often served to depict the tavern in colours and associations too attractive to the children of a reformed or sobered father? To the discredit of a state of society now fast wearing out of fashion, a large part of our traditional narratives and humour, and sketches of local biography, are mingled with the oaths and intoxication of the inn, or the more dangerous language and examples of fashionable dinner-parties and drinking bouts in city life.

Library of Congress

I know a large town, now distinguished for its orderly as well as intelligent and refined society, in which, forty years ago, or even less, social evening parties among parents of both sexes, were unknown; and where a father of a family, who set the example of assisting to entertain the female visitors of his wife, had to bear the brunt of all the tavern 231 haunters of the place, that is, of all the fathers of his acquaintance, as a bold and preposterous innovator. Such a fact will hardly be credited; but those who can recollect some years back, will be forced to admit its probability.

In times like those was planted the habit of intemperance, I might rather say the fashion of intoxication: that bitter root which has yielded such deadly fruit, and has been now, at last, partly plucked up with such difficulty.

Let us not overrate the importance of a tour in Europe, so much as to lose our relish for the enjoyments offered us by a journey at home. "And what are these enjoyments?" asked I of myself, as I seated myself a little before sunrise on the deck of a common freight-boat, on the Champlain Canal, and prepared to set off for a visit to the next village. Certainly, thought I, as I inhaled the fresh air, and heard the birds begin to chirp at waking, finer dewy mornings or a purer ether can nowhere be found than what our own hills and valleys afford. Yet nothing is less known, scarcely any thing is more seldom enjoyed, by those of our countrymen who talk most of the beauties of nature in Scotland or Italy. "Of all scenes in the world," exclaims Americus Frenchificatus, "nothing can compare with sunrise on the Alps!" Of course, this personage, who had returned from a voyage, enriched with half a dozen mispronounced French words and a pair of moustaches, claimed to indulge in a foreign rapture as he pronounced this exclamation.—"But, my good sir, have you ever seen a sunrise in the White Mountains of New-Hampshire?"—"No."—"Have you ever seen one in any part of America?"—"No:—they are not fit to be seen."—"And you, I suppose, are fit to judge of them?" And who is not like this gentleman, if not in foreign polish, in his contempt for home, and in foolish, degenerate, luxurious habits? The hotel I had left was

Library of Congress

full of travellers, yet I alone had opened my eyes to the finest part of the day, and my lungs to the purest air.

The boat, though rough and offering no accommodations, in the mean time had been sliding smoothly over the shining surface of the canal, and had brought me into a beautiful grove of forest trees, whose numberless stems, like the in 232 numerable columns of some extensive temple, were faithfully reflected below, while their thick canopy of foliage also appeared repeated apparently from an immense depth, so true was the mirror over which they hung. Why, I asked myself, is travelling on our canals considered so wearisome and destitute of interest? Here are noble productions of nature multiplied around, silence and solitude undisturbed by the rattling of wheels, and perfumed air unmingled with rising dust. Our canals often introduce us to the hearts of the forests; the retreats of wild animals are almost exposed to our view, and the nests even of rare birds hang over our heads. How can the public, how can some of my friends most distinguished for taste, prefer the crowded stage-coach, the dusty and thickly inhabited road, with the heat of the sun during a midday ride? Alas! a little reflection reminded me that our education does not prepare us for the enjoyment of scenes like those through which I was passing. Who knows the nature and uses of this fine tree; who can tell the varieties of this; how few, indeed, are there among men of education who can discriminate between many plants of marked and even opposite peculiarities! With the exception of those practical men whose business introduces them to such things, few have taken the pains to inquire at all into the important study of botany; and as for zoology, ornithology, &c., still less are they known, though the forests and fields are stocked with various birds and quadrupeds. The frivolities of life devour ten times the amount of hours which would be sufficient to give the young such knowledge of these and other subjects as would render them capable of deriving enjoyment and benefit from travelling. What more natural and easy, than to lead children into the garden or the field every day, teach them to observe leaves and flowers, fruits and seeds, animals and birds, and relate or read to them sketches of their nature and history? But, no! The father is too fond of his moneymaking, his wine, or his politics; and

Library of Congress

the mother of her dresses, parties, or novel-reading. And unfortunately such habits are by no means confined to the more frivolous of society.

233

How easy would it be for parents to teach their children, as one of my fellow-travellers taught me. Seating himself by my side, he remarked on the peculiarities of the various species of trees we passed on our way, touching upon their size, soils, uses, ages, modes of propagation, and capacity for improvement, the value which some of them would bear in other countries, the superiority of some of the species known in different climates, &c. &c.; until my mind was filled with admiration at the vast and interesting variety presented by the subject, and with respect for one whose memory was stored with such valuable facts, and who was disposed to communicate them.

It may be set down as one of the crying sins of this country, that good and intelligent men refuse to acknowledge their duties to the public. Whether at home or abroad, most of them seem to think there is no virtue in the world but modesty; and under her broad mantle, I fear they some times hide their indolence, private taste, personal vanity, and what not. Now, to say nothing of the modes in which Lawyer Loveall, Dr. Dogood, Judge Generous, Mr. Goodneighbour, Farmer Friendly, and other characters of the like nature, some, if not all of whom we find in every village and town, might contribute to the gratification, instruction and improvement of their own circles at home, why should they be so insensible of the claims which society has upon them when they go abroad? Put them, as strangers, into a steamboat's cabin, or a stage-coach, a canal packet, or a railroad-car, and they are as silent and timid as mice. They do not feel the superior power and respectability of virtue or knowledge, nor realize that it is their business to appear as their advocates, by exhibiting them in their own proper nature. They do not seize an early opportunity to use language and express sentiments which shall betray their own characters, but generally leave it to others to give a tone to conversation which sometimes becomes annoying to them, while it is useless or worse than useless to the company. I have often seen the young or the ignorant, or such as were comparatively so, court the

Library of Congress

conversation of those whose respectable appearance promised 234 something superior to themselves in mind or in heart; and have observed with pain that the privilege has been too often denied. I have seen men of distinction, accidentally discovered by fellow-travellers, and treated with respect and deference, yet disposed either to be personally flattered, or to affect cold indifference—too seldom, at least, showing a philanthropic desire to make every advantage subservient to the benefit of others. In short, I am persuaded that one great reason why there is so much that is frivolous among travelling parties, and why there is any thing offensive, is, that those whose duty it is to prevent it are too indifferent about their obligations, or neglect to seek proper opportunities and means.

Many persons meet on their travels who have little leisure or opportunity elsewhere to devote to the society of strangers; and to some of these such interviews have proved highly gratifying and permanently beneficial. But many a ride or excursion has been rendered irksome by a general silence among fellow-travellers, or the want of that refinement of manners and conversation which ought to have existed. I know that there are subjects, very excellent in themselves, which would be inappropriate for topics in a mixed company; and that those most forward are often the most conceited and shallow-minded of their party. But I am favouring a just medium. I can, perhaps, show something of my meaning by a real case.

Cards were once called for on board of a boat, where none objecting, a party or two sat down at whist, who filled the cabin with their voices for a couple of hours. For want of a timely word of disapprobation from a few of us present, which would have sufficed, we were condemned to listen a long time to such things as the following; and were afterward annoyed by the effects of the liquor, to which the game conducted some of the players.

“I've won two hands of Mr. Jones.”

“Ah! so you have.”

Library of Congress

“That'll answer. That's one over—I've a mind to let that fellow be. We want four to begin with—six round.”

“Now, look, hold on your hair!”

235

“Ah! I think I'll stand that, sir.”

“It's astonishing! eleven, eight, thirteen; I never saw such dealing!”

“After this hand—”

“Bless my stars!”

“Cut 'em.”

“What do you say!”

“Cut 'em!”

“That's over.”

“Now I want a ten.”

“Mr. Jones, advise 'em.”

“Ten, there's twenty, dub, dub, dub; hold on to that!”

“I, O, U—come, lay your hands there—plaguy luck as ever anybody had!”

“You a notion of turning in, captain?”

“What say?”

Library of Congress

“Notion of turnin' in?”

“No, not yet.”

“Well, I think I shall have to pretty soon.”

“Ha, ha, ha! We begin to feel dreadfully here! Twenty:—four, ten and four is fourteen, and six is twenty, sir.”

“Play up all round!”

“How's that?”

“O, if I could have got ten then!”

“We're entitled to the deal!”

“Ten! ha, ha!”

“Cut 'em again—go ahead—split 'em—that's right.”

“Now, if I can get an ace—fourteen.”

“Give us one apiece.”

“Give me a couple apiece.”

“Hold on—there we are—play up—that helps the bank.”

“I hope luck won't go against me all the time.”

“Who's got a good hand? Them that ha'n't, say so.”

“Eighteen, nineteen, play twenty.”

Library of Congress

“Hold on—hold on—what have you got now?”

“Give me a fish.”

236

“Stop, stop, stop!”

“That's right, sir, a small one.”

“Here 'tis again—sixteen I want to find; hold still—”

“Give us a fish.”

“My next deal.”

“There's your two fish.”

“I commence to deal there.”

“Stop!”

“Turn 'em right over.”

“We are three, sir.”

“Take 'em—that's right.”

“Yes.”

“What do you want?”

“One.”

“Let her lay—O take one of them from the pack.”

Library of Congress

“That'll be too much.”

“I'll bet he don't get it.”

“I'll bet he don't too.”

“Well, I'll bet he duz.”

CHAPTER XXX.

Whitehall—Story of Sergeant Tom, a Creature of the Revolution—Lake George—Charming Scenery, and interesting Historical Associations—Ticonderoga—A Revolutionary Tradition—An Oracle of Philology—Crown Point.

Whitehall, formerly Skeenesborough, which is in this vicinity, is associated in my mind with the career of a wild, hair-brained fellow, who joined the American army at the breaking out of the Revolution, by the persuasion of an active officer, from whom I once received a sketch of his military course. A sergeancy was obtained for Tom, but he had not been long in the exercise of it, when his friend the colonel, arriving at the camp at Skeenesborough, where he 237 was, found him degraded to a private sentry. By his exertions he got him reinstated; and knowing his wild temper, cautioned him against getting into any quarrel with the soldiers, or the major, even if they should call him a broken sergeant, as he apprehended. But this was all in vain. The next afternoon news came that Tom was in the guard-house. On inquiry, he learned that he had flogged the soldiers and cleared them out of the tent, and threatened to kill the major. Tom had sent for the colonel to see him; but this he refused, though he felt bound, out of regard to his family, to exert himself in his behalf.

The squadron was then fitting out on the lake, under Arnold, to oppose the British; and with great exertions the colonel prevailed upon Tom's captain, major, and general, to let him off without a court-martial, on condition that he should enlist on board a ship. Tom had

Library of Congress

been a sailor, and cheerfully accepted the proposition, expressing the warmest gratitude to his friend, to whom he attributed his escape; and solemnly swore to serve him whenever he could, even at the risk of his life. Although the colonel believed him to be entirely devoid of principle, he placed implicit reliance in this solemn and voluntary promise, as he was susceptible of gratitude.

The galley in which Tom served as sergeant of marines, in the battle off Crown Point, fought the English flag-vessel, side by side, with great vigour. Tom, at length finding all the officers above him wounded, fought her himself, until his galley was found to be in a sinking condition. One of our commanders came up, received him on board, gave him a conspicuous part the rest of the day, and honoured him with peculiar marks of approbation. Tom, however, was not long on shore before he deserted, and joined the British army in Canada. An expedition was proposed to surprise Ballston, then a frontier town, and Tom was offered a large reward to join it. This he refused, alleging that it was the residence of his father; but partly, no doubt, because his benefactor also lived there. Finding, however, that the expedition would proceed, he joined it, that he might befriend him; and performed important service in secret, to 21 238 which my informant considered himself indebted for liberty, if not for life. The details are interesting: but I cannot stay to write them now.

The first glimpse I caught of Lake George satisfied me that my expectations would be almost equalled; for I had heard it described in such glowing terms in my boyhood, that the conception I entertained of its beauties were undoubtedly romantic and extravagant, as I had before had occasion to reflect. If the breadth of a lake be too great, or its shores too low, there must be a want of bold features on the margin. A large level surface is sublime; but we soon feel a want of variety. A more limited plain is often beautiful; but it is necessarily insipid if alone; and a sheet of water particularly requires contrasts to relieve the satiety which the mind feels in contemplating it. The Lake of Geneva would be greatly

Library of Congress

improved in beauty, if a few of the eminences which stand at the distance of several miles could be planted upon its very banks.

Lake George lies in contact with the mountains, whose bases are washed by its pure waters, while its summits hasten to their terminations just above. I had inspected some manuscript military maps of the French war in this vicinity, so that I soon caught some of the zigzags of Montcalm's lines of approach to Fort William Henry (which, alas! is now an insignificant heap on the shore), and fixed on the thick grove on my left, which shades the grave of about one thousand of his men. On the right, swelling from the head of the lake, was the elevation crowned by Fort George, long in ruins, and in 1745 the scene of General Dieskau's defeat, before a breastwork of logs. Along the waste ground in the little valley this side, was perpetrated the massacre of the soldiers, women, and children from Fort William Henry, by Indians. The sky suddenly grew dark as I approached the pretty village of Caldwell, and a thunder-shower passed just before us, obscuring for a few minutes the fields and dwellings; and then passing slowly down the lake, whither it bore off a brilliant rainbow on its bosom. The beauty of the scene, from my window, in the rear of the hotel, I would fain describe, especially as it appeared

Lake George

239 near sunset, when the broad and green slope to the margin of the clear water was striped with the long shadows of trees and mountains, and the surface of the lake was calm, and the opposite ridge of French Mountain raised its immense curtain of foliage, as it were, perpendicularly to the clouds.

In this place a very different excitement seems to affect the visitors from that which is felt at the Springs, where there is no scenery to draw off the thoughts from ourselves and each other. The conversation at table seemed improved, and the various parties had a variety of objects before them for the day: walks, rides, and boat parties, to visit the forts or to make an excursion to Tea Island. One would hardly think that the house could be much visited

Library of Congress

in the winter season; but I found some of the family speaking familiarly of Montreal and its inhabitants, who, I learned, often come down in parties in sleighs.

I had several strolls along the shore on both sides of the lake near Ticonderoga, traced out the old French lines on which General Abercrombie's army made so ridiculous an attack in 1758, and climbed to the redoubts on Mount Independence. It is melancholy to renew the impressions which must have been made by the aspect of these hills and headlands, these woods and waters, at night, when, after General St. Clair had ordered the evacuation of the fortress and the retreat of the troops, the sudden bursting out of a fire in a building at the foot of Mount Independence illuminated the scene, betrayed the motions of the Americans, and awakened the fire of their enemies.

There is an extensive, wild, and mountainous region north and west from this spot, where there are hardly any inhabitants, except the beasts of the forests. I heard, in a loghouse, some exciting tales told about deer-hunting; and on a warm afternoon, I heard an old man talk in the following strain, as he was sitting in the sun, surrounded by several bantering farmers' sons:—

“You are a stranger, sir, I presume, and perhaps don't know me nor my family. That's the way with the world: these boys that have grown up don't know but what their 240 fathers were as respectable as mine. I've not done right that I'm willing to allow. But I an't so bad as Bill. He got to drinking too much a good many years ago, and learned to fiddle, and used to leave home sometimes, and go off round to dances, and so on. But he had as good a wife as ever was, and he's reformed, and so am I. I've come across the lake to help at harvesting, and get some wool and carry back for the children to card up, and then we'll have, it spun and made into something warm for 'em next winter. These women-folks they are the master-critturs for such things. They'll sit and card and talk, and get a wonderful deal done. But education is a great thing, and we can't get it over there among the mountains where there an't nobody five miles back from the lake. It's a curious country there, there's so many ponds. There's Long Pond, and Square Pond, Goose Pond, and

Library of Congress

Crane Lake, and Paradox Pond, and Pyramid Lake, and—that's all, I believe. Well, now there, an't nobody but me that lives anywhere about here, that knows how these ponds got their names.”

“Well, do you know, Uncle Zeek?” asked one of the company.

“Why, yes; there's Long Pond and Square Pond, they were called so because of their shape; and the wild geese go to Goose Pond; and Crane Lake, the surveyors found a crane's nest on the bank. And then there's something very curious about Paradox Pond: the stream that the outlet falls into is sometimes swelled by a thunder-shower that don't reach the pond, and then the water sets back through the outlet into it. So you see I know all about the history of that country.”

“But,” said I, “you have not informed us concerning Pyramid Lake.”

“Oh, as for that,” said he, “I don't rightly know what that took its name from, without it was because they sometimes catch suckers there very early: in the season.”

“However,” said he, “I was talking about my family. You must know that my grandfather came from England with Lord Howe. He had just finished his education at 241 Oxford: and there's few men that have got as much learning now-a-days. What an army that was! Every man was dressed in superfine broad cloth, with gold knee buckles. And, besides, though I am almost ashamed to say it, I am connected by marriage with General Arnold's family. He was a good soldier, though, at Sarritoag, and some said he got the victory there. Why don't you sing the old songs oftener, boys?”

That the great Mount Defiance They soon would fortify:— We found that we must quit our lines, Or ev'ry man must die.

Which soon we did in haste perform, And went to Sarritoag, A burning all the buildings We found along the road.

Library of Congress

'Twas then the gen'rous thought inspir'd The noble Gates's mind, For to send out Gin'ral Arnold, To see if he could find

A passage through the inimy, Wherever he might be; Which soon he did accomplish, And set the country free."

I made a passage to Crown Point one pleasant afternoon and evening, in a small lake schooner, built of boards, laid in several courses, without timber, on Annesley's plan. Its masts also were made so as to be easily struck; and the dimensions and fixtures being those of a canal-boat, it had taken a cargo through the Erie Canal, I believe to New-York, and was now on its return to the lower part of Lake Champlain. The crew, consisting of only two men and a boy, were full of fresh water wit and anecdotes, and incidents by canal, lake, and river, and at once skilful and obliging. As they were telling a long eel story, the neighbouring eminences on the left, and the distant ridges of the Green Mountains on the east, especially the Camel's Hump, made a magnificent appearance in the declining sun, while we passed near enough to the scattered dwellings to feel some interest in the inhabitants of several retired but pleasant spots. I was carefully landed in the jolly boat, under a bright moon, at a pretty beach on Chimney Point; and after a few hours' repose at the inn, examined with interest the striking features of that neighbourhood, not less interesting in scenery than in history. On the elevated point, while a fine breeze was blowing, I traced out an old breastwork, once extending from cove to cove, and a redoubt which looked up and down the lake for a great distance, while the ruins of Crown Point lay exposed to the eye on the opposite side of the lake, here reduced to the breadth of a river. What a commanding position! Nothing could pass this way without sailing long in the range of the artillery of the old fortress, then passing it in review with broadside exposed to the batteries within musket-shot, and afterward, if it could survive this risk, steering for several more in the range of one of the five great redoubts, which were in advance of the angles of the main-work. I crossed the ferry, and rambled about the solitary ruins, but found them in a pretty good state of preservation. The original fort, erected by the French on the shore,

Library of Congress

is near the landing. The long, broad, and low point, the end of which is occupied by the fortifications, is overgrown by young trees, which have sprouted since its evacuation, and there is a grove of the same age as that at Ticonderoga. The parade within the fortress was green, and almost as smooth as if still in use; while only the want of roofs and glass in the brick buildings surrounding it, and the growth of sumacs round the parapet, showed that the place was deserted. The barracks were occupied partly by sheep and partly by swallows; and the solitary contemplation of the scene around wakened many reflections on past events.

243

CHAPTER XXXI.

Feelings on entering Canada—State of Society—Emigrants—Scenery, &c. on the St. Lawrence—Architecture—Wilful Errors on Education in Convents.

Disappointment is the first feeling of a traveller on entering Canada by this route. There is no scenery, and he soon feels as if there were no inhabitants, that is, none in whom he can take interest. The country is flat, and miserably cultivated; and you have positive evidence, on every side, that the people ought to be sent to school an age or two, and laughed at or provoked personally in some manner to induce them to build decent houses, keep them clean, root out the thistles and plant corn, cut down militia poles, and erect school houses—and allow the soil to produce food for man and beast, for which it seems perfectly willing; take courage, indulge hopes of rising, and set themselves about it. It is bad enough for the New-Englanders to be for ever “guessing,” and “contriving,” and “tinkering,” and “fixing,” I know; but it is a good deal worse to do neither. I ached to put some of the people I met, old and young, into the hands of a certain district school-master, the greatest tyrant I ever knew. It seemed to me that ignorance had in their case assumed the symptoms of so terrible, so fatal a disease, that I would have volunteered to put on his thumb-screws and borne him out in any of his severest measures, if there were any hope that so he might get a morsel of knowledge into any crevice of their whole brains. “Raze it,

Library of Congress

raze it to the foundations," I exclaimed, at the sight of the great fabric of public ignorance which is reared among these active and amiable people.

Montreal Mountain is in sight just before you for miles before you reach the river; and you have little else to 244 observe but Belleisle and Boucherville Mountains, on the right, over the vast plain, after leaving St. John's. The old and comfortless houses of Laprairie, the gloomy nunnery, with spacious grounds enclosed with high walls, and the vociferous, French speaking people on the shore of the noble St. Lawrence, remind one of Europe.

The steamboats on the St. Lawrence and the Lakes have been often crowded to excess this season, by the emigrants newly-arrived from Great Britain, so much so as to render travelling for pleasure remarkably "unpleasant." And such a mixed company as has often been observed in these cargoes! While some of those obliging tourists, who occasionally write about us, have such subjects before their eyes, they might save themselves the trouble of leaving home. Among the emigrants, it has been remarked, there has been this year a much larger proportion of intelligent and wealthy persons than usual, and the western states have had the benefit of adding not a few of them to their population. But some appeared to be entirely unprovided with necessary information, as well as pecuniary means, to direct their course to advantage after their arrival. One person might be heard making inquiries about the country through which he was passing, that showed he had never been in a geography class in his life; while many were at best but extremely ill versed in "the use of the globes," which the English school advertisements seem to regard as such an accomplishment. What will not ignorance do, and at the same time leave undone! I am persuaded that many of the emigrants might. save years of time, and all the money they bring out, if they would but ask a few such questions as the boys in the New-York Public-schools could readily answer, and act on the knowledge thus obtained. One woman you will hear inquiring for her husband or children, who have come to, America; another resolving to return to-morrow; one sick, and believing the climate is unhealthy; another amazed at the beauty and fertility of the country, the friendliness of the people, the

Library of Congress

abundance of work, the high wages, the cheapness of land, and in short, the superiority of every thing to his expectations. The only wonder to me was,

Varenes, on the St. Lawrence.

245 that they were not all delighted; for I have seen the ships in which some of them have crossed the Atlantic, and should think that any thing would be preferred to life on board of them.

I asked an old Scotchman one day, just arrived, whether he had had a pleasant passage. He pointed down the half-closed hatches and said, "In that hole there were above ninety of us; and yet this was the only ventilator we had during a voyage of six weeks, except three days, when the after-hatches for a short time were removed. On account of the impurity of the air, I used to come on deck at night, and could scarcely persuade myself to return." I confess that the sight presented below sunk my ideas of human nature to a grade that always makes me feel uncomfortable for a day or two. The sounds which rose together reminded me of Bunyan's pit of Tophet, though the old man did not answer my idea of a shepherd of the Delectable Mountains.

A few days may be agreeably spent at Montreal and Quebec, and in visiting the environs: for, although there is little to excite interest in the literary institutions (knowledge, in all its branches, being at a low ebb), the foreign air of the people, their habitations and manners, the appearance of activity which pervades every thing during the brief summer which the climate allows, and the peculiar features of the natural scenery, present considerable attractions. Time is not allowed to enter into detail. Let us see, then, whether any idea of the variety and nature of the objects, most striking to a traveller, may be conveyed by a rapid mention of them.

The approach to Montreal, in one of the Laprairie ferry-boats, allows you to contemplate it at leisure. The distance is nine miles: the river, which is three miles broad, being crossed transversely. You are excited by the rapidity of the powerful steamboat, and of the current,

Library of Congress

bearing you like a bird over a ragged channel, which often is visible, covered with crags, apparently ready to tear the bottom of the vessel. French, of a harsh and uncouth dialect, is dinned in your ears by market-men and women, 246 watching their baskets of roots, herbs, &c., gathered in scanty harvest from some part of the rich but abused plain, which extends from the river's bank to the horizon, except where it is bounded by a few distant and imposing isolated mountains. If you cross in a batteau, you hear the boat song of your rowers, in which there is little sweetness or poetry. The city, spreading along the low shore of the river, shoots up the spires of five or six churches, with the domes of two convents, and the towers of the new cathedral, against the Mountain of Montreal, which alone rescues the scene from utter tameness. Those who wish to contemplate the largest specimen of barbarous architecture in North America (saving Mexico), may visit the cathedral.

What apology is there for the introduction of the Gothic style into the United States? What is there among us which is signified by it? What is there connected with it in our history or institutions; and what good influence can we expect from it upon the future? We have had nothing like a gradual progress of taste through many ages, and no successive races of men in different stages of civilization, or any period of our history at all allied to such a style. At the same time our condition is based on the foundation of universal knowledge: there is no mystery, no secrecy, no ignorance. Nothing is concealed, nothing is done through systematic imposture. Neither do we admit of any principle by which the feelings are to be influenced independently of the judgment. Why then should we meddle with other architecture, in which vastness and gloom work their effects upon the heart, without offering to the thought any distinct subject to fasten upon; in which the eyes are shown dark recesses which they cannot penetrate, and a multitude of laboured devices and ornaments the mind would in vain understand? Simplicity and use, two of the great features of nature's works, are banished hence; the light for which our eyes were formed is obscured; and the objects and ends of our creation mystified, as far as architectural objects can produce such an effect.

Library of Congress

Why should we wish, in this country, to present vast piles to the eye, in which it can trace none of the great principles 247 of natural taste; in which the mind finds only perplexity; and the feelings, instead of being exalted with hope and encouragement, are depressed with undefined gloom. How far more appropriate are the pure and chaste Greek styles to our own history, character, and condition! I would take the Doric and Ionic in preference to the Corinthian: and, if I may judge from my own feelings, the first-mentioned is to be preferred to all others. Regard the ancient rules and proportions so far as they are appropriate to the uses of our public edifices, and consistent with the nature of our climate; and then the more vigorously you cultivate taste and multiply specimens in cities, towns, villages, and the very forests where they may be needed, the better. In America there is no apology for a gradual introduction of any species of perfection which necessity does not forbid us to know at once. We must admit only the best of every thing. Where the forest tree falls, there let taste erect her purest monuments, while learning adopts the best methods for instruction, and philanthropy binds heart to heart with the love of the gospel: for liberty has established a system which requires the most powerful support of us all, and we are answerable to mankind for an exhibition of the noblest results of civilization and Christianity.

One of the unaccountable traits of the taste of our countrymen, is displayed by many of them on entering a Canadian town. They will take off their children to the nunneries, obtain, if possible, an interview with the superieures, purchase a few trifles of domestic manufacture, infer from what they see that all must be well arranged and systematic in every department, because they spend a few minutes in the presence of stiff and starched nuns, and go away with a gratuitous impression that there is a great deal of solid instruction given to the children and young persons whom they profess to teach.

248

CHAPTER XXXI.

Library of Congress

Different Travellers have different Eyes—The Polish Exiles—Regrets on the Necessity of closing—“Tom Slowstarter's” Farewell.

How strongly was I struck, the other day, with the contrast between two foreigners, whom I met travelling in the United States: a Frenchman and a South American! The one recalled to my recollection Monsieur Levasseur, who, while in the train of General Lafayette, witnessed the labours of the New-York firemen one night at a conflagration. Having come from a physical people, a nation of materialists, he wished to handle one of the engines, in order to form an idea of those machines which he thought exhibited some of the great capacities of republicans. The South American was always admiring the results of some moral cause in our society; and the sagacity and just sentiments he displayed were not only gratifying, but instructive. And what a comment was here on the political systems of Europe and America! The old world is managed like an engine. Millions of her inhabitants are standing this day like machines, with their weapons presented, like the teeth of a bark-mill, or the cogs of a cider grinder, ready to do work by the exertion of brute force. What an immense capital stands from age to age invested in arsenals and foundries, fortresses, fleets, and powder-mills; yet the budget of war annually groans under new appropriations. Peace may sit balancing her pinions over them for a time; but something soon sets her on the wing; and what shall induce her again to alight? When a crop of humanity is to be gathered, when the flowers of a new season are to be plucked, the machinery moves again; its course is against mankind, its track is a stream of human gore. The Greeks cried for freedom, but they must pass through Missolonghi 249 to reach it. The Polanders claimed the rights of men, and they are sent to weep their loss in Siberia. Wherever the principles, in which we so thanklessly live, are even whispered in Europe, there comes the wild beast of oppression. His iron step is heard in the university, his gripe is felt in the school and at the fireside: while on this side of the Atlantic, education, universal example, and the government—even self-interest and prejudice itself, invite, nay, in a manner, constrain us to hear the language of liberty and humanity, and to associate to sustain them; in Europe, the warmest hearts are chilled by the sight of the manacles

Library of Congress

and dungeons to which such sentiments are condemned. Indeed, nobler, more exalted men than we, men with a far livelier and more active devotion to the good of mankind than ourselves, are now, while we speak, shut up in prison, in loneliness and misery, friendless and oppressed, because the enemies of truth and righteousness, of light and wisdom, of liberty and right, are too many and too strong.

Now are there no greater duties incumbent on us than to eat and drink, and take the good of the things around us! Is there no higher object for us to aim at than merely to gain wealth and honour, or to exercise power? Whoever devotes himself exclusively to either of these, is an enemy of our country, a foe to mankind, a blot on our land, a depreciator of our advantages, an ingrate to our heavenly benefactor.

The two hundred and thirty-six Polanders who have been sent to the United States, by the arbitrary and inhuman power of Austria, have among them individuals presenting peculiar claims to the interest and kindness of Americans. Most of them are severe sufferers for the sake of liberal views and patriotic exertions in favour of freedom. A few of them, however, were of bad character, and were sent here to discredit the others. The government of Austria is a severe despotism; and one of its most detestable features was displayed in an attempt to injure the characters of men whose patriotism they hated and feared. After these Polanders had been imprisoned at Brinder for some months, on various pretexts, without trial or charge, having been 22 250 collected from different quarters, and generally unacquainted with each other, arrangements were made to transport them to Trieste, where they were to embark for this country. This step they consented to, because the only alternative offered was, that they should be delivered up to Russia. They were to be transported in detachments; and the first that was sent off consisted of those who had been imprisoned for crimes, that their conduct might make an impression unfavourable to the patriots. Since their arrival in America, a discrimination has been made, and the unworthy set aside.

Library of Congress

Here they now are on our coast, necessarily unknown, except so far as we choose to seek an acquaintance with them, ignorant of our language, manners, and habits, but, like the blind or the dumb, presenting on that account double claims to our sympathy and aid. Like those suffering under some natural infirmity from which we are happily free, they also teach us lessons of gratitude and of duty, under the superior blessings which we enjoy.

A banished Pole should move among us as a living monument of arbitrary power, and whenever we look upon him it should be with the recollection—"Here is a victim of despotism! Here is a man, such as our ancestors would have chosen to be,—if offered his alternative—slavery or banishment: here is one who has endured that arbitrary power to which our ancestors would not submit, but resisted, for the sake of their children."

It seemed to me, while conversing with some of these lonely exiles, as if Providence had sent them among us at this time not without a kind design. We have been so remote from the sight of oppression and violence, so long accustomed to regard tyranny and lawless rule as mere creatures of the imagination, that when sentiments are declared, and measures taken tending strongly that way, instead of taking the alarm, too many of us look on with indifference, as if there were a wall of impenetrable brass erected to secure our liberty. These melancholy and silent strangers seem to whisper to us, to beware of ourselves, our freedom, and our country: and if their presence shall render us any more watchful, if it shall lead us to reflect more intently 251 on the inestimable privileges we possess, of the delicate and responsible trust committed to us for the benefit of mankind, in being made the depositories of free institutions and Christian light and liberty, it will not have been in vain that our sympathy for them has been painfully excited, or that they have been deprived of property, friends, and home.

Some eminent musicians have said that the most important part of an air is the end; and that, no matter what are the merits of a composition, if there be appropriate harmony in the closing note, the impression must be delightful, and the hearers will be content: so gourmands, sometimes, take special pains to lay by their choicest morsels for the last, that

Library of Congress

the final bit may convey to the palate the richest flavours and spicery—because its taste is to be lasting. How mortifying then, to an author, who would not intentionally violate any of the great rules of *taste*, to find that no such advantage, as he could wish to make a happy close, is allowed him. Here I am suddenly admonished, by the amount of paper I have blotted, that I must bring my hasty remarks to an end. It is in vain for me to plead that I have a heap of materials lying yet untouched before me, scenes of nature, both in ink and crayon, words of the wise, and oracles of fools, remarks of chance-travellers, and thoughts of my own, with snatches from Greek and Latin authors, unaccountably preserved from the chaos of my early studies, now applied, well or ill, to modern affairs—it is in vain to declare that a book, to be appropriate, should be neither far in advance of, nor behind society, and that all these materials will deteriorate and perish in a season. Indeed, the fact is, I have found things so rapidly moving around me while I have been making this volume, that I have been on a constant race to keep up. Now out of breath, indeed, but not exhausted nor entirely discouraged, I am advised to desist; and, even while I hesitate, am, chagrined to think that I already begin to be distanced.

I feel, in short, that I am in much the same condition in 252 which I last saw my old friend Tom Slowstarter. It was on the Amboy and Trenton railroad. We had stopped “to water,” as the facetious term is—(not our horses, but the steam-boiler)—and Tom had alighted to look at the machinery. The bell rang, the wheels began to move, and the passengers called to him to hurry; but the working of one of the small cog-wheels perplexed him so much that he kept pace on foot. “Overtake us, and jump in Tom, you'll be left!” cried the passengers. “Are you speaking to a poet, or a prose-writer?” said Tom; “I am not behind the world, much less out of sight of it. I want to look a little further into things.”—“If you stop to understand any thing,” said the engineer, “you can't go with us.”—“Here's something wrong,” said Tom—“I want to know a little how it is you go ahead so, and then I'll ride.”—“If you are going to know much, you can't be in our company. You must make up your mind to one thing or the other pretty quick; so jump in.”—“I want to see it go round once or twice more,” said Tom: “now I'm ready; open the door.” The door was opened, but the engine

Library of Congress

had begun to snort quicker and quicker, and the wheels went round like a buzz. Tom laid himself almost flat with running;—and “Here, take my hand—run, Tom, run—a little faster, a little faster!” resounded from the cars, while he was straining legs, arms, and fingers, to get up again with his companions. “You had better stop,” said one, at this crisis; and Tom's courage failed in an instant. He gave up the chase, and stood like a post in the middle of the road, while all the caravan joined in a general shout of “Good-by, Mr. Slowstarter! Good-by, Mr. Know-a-little.”—“Good-by, good-by,” said Tom: “good-by, Mr. Puffer and family,—there's nothing of you but noise and motion—but yet I wish I was with you. The next time I'll try to find less fault, and keep up with society.” Tom has never since been heard of.

FINIS.

C 310 88